Encounter

December 1977 80p

Intellectuals in Disarray

Sceptical pieces on Modern Masters & Current Trends

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William Trevor
The Summer-House

Philip Hobsbaum
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Roy Fuller replies
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Yehudi Menuhin
A Reply to B. H. Haggin on Toscanini & Furtwängler

Edited by Melvin J Lasky & Anthony Thwaite

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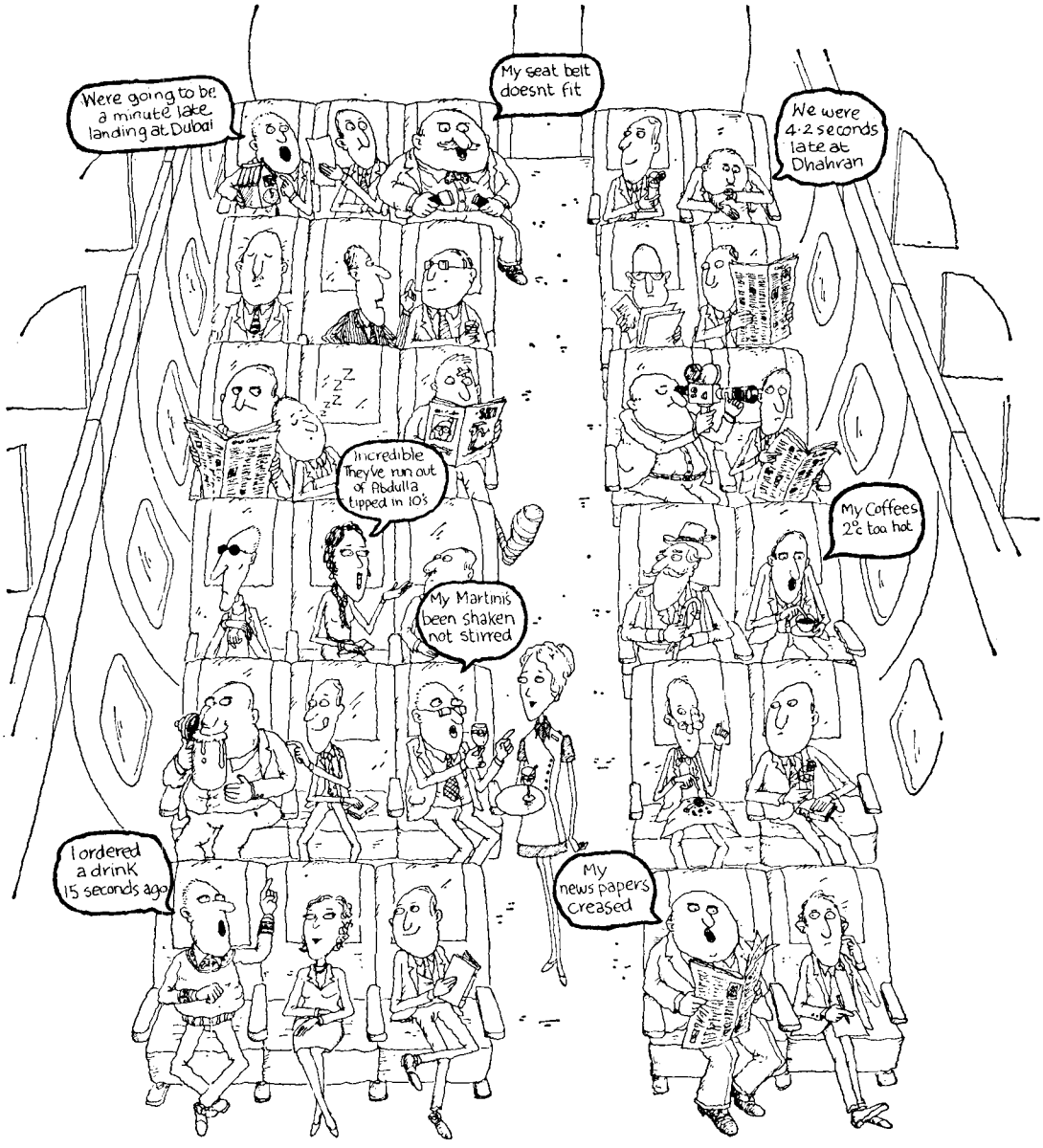
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Encounter

DECEMBER 1977
VOL. XLIX NO. 6

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Per :copy UK 80p: USA & Canada $2.00. Back numbers £1.00 ($2.50). Postage extra: 15p (25c)
Annual Subscriptions: UK & Europe £8.75: USA & Canada $21.00 surface, $26.00 by air: Elsewhere £10.00.
Binder for six copies: £2.00 ($4.00).
Address for all departments: Encounter Ltd., 59 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4JS (01-836 4194).
US news-stand distribution by Gordon & Gotch (USA) Inc., P.O. Box 1425, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.
Authorised as Second-class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for payment of postage in cash.
Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. ©*1977 by Encounter Ltd.*
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William Trevor

The Summer-House

MY FATHER CAME BACK twice to the farm, unexpectedly, without warning. He walked into the kitchen, the first time one Thursday morning when there was nobody there, the second time on a Thursday afternoon.

My mother told us how on the first occasion she'd been crossing the yard with four eggs, all that the hens had laid, and how she'd sensed that something was different. The sheepdogs weren't in the yard, where they usually were at this time. Vaguely she'd thought that that was unusual. Hours later, when Betty and Dick and I came in from school, our parents were sitting at the kitchen table, talking. He was still in his army uniform. The big brown tea-pot was on the table, and two cups with the dregs of tea in them, and bread on the bread-board, and butter and blackberry jam. There was a plate he'd eaten a fry from, with the marks of egg-yolk on it. Even now it seems like yesterday. He smiled a slow, teasing smile at us, as though mocking the emotion we felt at seeing him there, making a joke even of that. Then Betty ran over to him and hugged him. I hugged him too. Dick stood awkwardly.

The second time he returned he walked into the kitchen at half-past four, just after I'd come in from school. I was alone, having my tea.

"Hullo, Matilda", he said.

I was nine then. Betty was sixteen and Dick was seventeen. Dick wasn't there that second time: he'd gone into the army himself. Betty had left the Grammar School and was helping my mother to keep the farm going. I was still at Miss Pritchard's Primary.

I was going to be pretty, people used to say, although I couldn't see it myself. My hair had a reddish tinge like my mother's, but it was straight and uninteresting. I had freckles, which I hated, and my eyes were a shade of blue I didn't much care for either. I detested being called Matilda. Betty and Dick, I considered, were much nicer names, and Betty herself was beautiful, with a mouth like a rose. My friend Belle Frye was getting to be beautiful also. She claimed to have Spanish blood in her, though it was never clear where it came from. Her hair was jet-black and her skin, even in the middle of winter, was almost as deeply brown as her eyes. I'd have loved to look like her and to be called Belle Frye, which I thought was a marvellous name.

I made my father tea that Thursday afternoon and I felt a bit shy because I hadn't seen him for so long. He didn't comment on my making the tea, although he might have said that I hadn't been able to before. Instead he said he hadn't had a decent cup of tea since he'd been home the last time. "It's great to be home, Matilda", he said.

A FEW WEEKS LATER my mother told me he was dead. She told me at that same time of day and on a Thursday also: a warm June afternoon that had been tiring to trudge home from school through.

"Belle Frye had to stay in for two hours", I was saying as I came into the kitchen. My mother told me to sit down.

The repetition was extraordinary, the three Thursday afternoons. That night in bed I was aware of it, lying awake thinking about him, wondering if he'd actually been killed on a Thursday also.

All the days of the week had a special thing about them: they had different characters and even different colours. Monday was

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light-brown, Tuesday black, Wednesday grey, Thursday orange, Friday yellow, Saturday purplish, Sunday white. Tuesday was a day I liked because we had double History, Friday was cosy, Saturday I liked best of all. Thursday would be special now: I thought that, marking the day with my grief, unable to cry any more. And then I remembered that it had been a Thursday afternoon when old Mrs Ashburton had invited everyone for miles around to her tennis party, when I had realised for the first time that there was going to be a war against the Germans: Thursday 31 August 1939.

I would have liked there to be a funeral, and I kept thinking about one. I never mentioned it to my mother or to Betty, or asked them if my father had had a funeral in France. I knew he hadn't. I'd heard him saying they just had to leave you there. My mother would cry if I'd said anything about it.

Then Dick came back, the first time home since he'd joined the army. He'd been informed too, and time had passed, several months, so that we were all used to it by now. It was even quite like the two times my father had returned, Dick telling stories about the army. We sat in the kitchen listening to him, huddled around the range, with the sheepdogs under the table, and when the time came for him to go away I felt as I'd felt when my father had gone back. I knew that Betty and my mother were thinking about Dick in that way, too: I could feel it, standing in the yard holding my mother's hand.

Colin Gregg, who'd kissed Betty at Mrs Ashburton's tennis party, came to the farm when he was home on leave. Joe and Arthur, who'd worked for my father on the farm, came also. At one time or another they all said they were sorry about my father's death, trying not to say it when I was listening, lowering their voices, speaking to my mother.

TWO YEARS WENT by like that. Dick still came back, and Colin Gregg and Joe and Arthur. I left Miss Pritchard's Primary and went to the Grammar School. I heard Betty confiding to my mother that she was in love with Colin Gregg, and you could see that it was Colin Gregg being in the war she thought about now, not Dick. Belle Frye's father had had his left arm amputated because of a wound and had to stay at home after that. A boy who'd been at the Grammar School, Roger Laze, had an accident with a gun when he was shooting rabbits, losing half his left foot. People said it was a lie about the rabbit shooting. They said his mother had shot his foot off so that he wouldn't have to go into the army.

At church on Sundays the Reverend Throataway used to pray for victory and peace, and at school there was talk about the Russians, and jokes about Hitler and Goering and most of all about Goebbels. I remembered how old Mrs Ashburton used to talk about the previous war, from which her husband had come back with some kind of shell shock. She'd made me think of Germans as being grey and steely, and I hated them now, just as she had. Whenever I thought about them I could see their helmets, different from the helmets of English soldiers, protecting their necks as well as their heads. Whenever I thought of the time before the war I thought of Mrs Ashburton, who had died soon after she'd given her tennis party. On the way home from school I'd sometimes go into the garden of Challacombe Manor and stand there looking at the tall grass on the tennis court, remembering all the people who'd come that afternoon, and how they'd said it was just like my father to say the tennis party was a lot of nonsense and then to bring on the beer and cider at the end of the day. The tennis party had been all mixed up with our family. The tennis court hadn't been used for years and old Mrs Ashburton had asked Dick if he'd get it into order and Betty had made Dick do it. My mother and Betty made cakes and sandwiches and meringues. It all felt like the last thing that had happened before the war had begun. It was the end of our being as we had been in our farm-house, just as in the past, after the previous war, there must have been another end: when the farm had ceased to be the home-farm of Challacombe Manor, when the estate had been divided up because Mrs Ashburton's husband couldn't manage to run it any more.

When I wandered about the overgrown garden of Challacombe Manor I wondered what Mr Ashburton had been like before the war had affected him, but I couldn't quite see him in my mind's eye: all I could see

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was the person Mrs Ashburton had told me about, the silent man who'd come back, who hadn't noticed that everything was falling into rack and ruin around him. And then that image would disappear and I'd see my father instead, as he'd been in the farmhouse. I remembered without an effort the brown skin of his arms and his brown, wide forehead and the way crinkles formed at the sides of his eyes. I remembered his hands on the kitchen table at mealtimes, or holding a newspaper. I remembered his voice saying there'd been frost. "Jack Frost's been", he used to say.

WHEN I WAS ELEVEN I began to pray a lot. I prayed that my father should be safe in heaven and not worried about us. I prayed that Dick should be safe in the war, and that the war would soon end. In Divinity lessons the Reverend Throataway used to explain to us that God was in the weeds and the insects, not just in butterflies and flowers. God was involved in the worst things we did as well as our virtues, he said, and we drove another thorn into His beloved son's head when we were wicked. I found that difficult to understand. I looked at weeds and insects, endeavouring to imagine God's presence in them but not succeeding. I asked Belle Frye if she could, but she giggled and said God was a carpenter called Joseph, the father of Jesus Christ. Belle Frye was silly and the Reverend Throataway so vague and complicated that his arguments about the nature of God seemed to me like foolish chatter. God was neither a carpenter nor a presence in weeds and insects. God was a figure in robes, with a beard and shreds of cloud around Him. The Paradise that was mentioned in the Bible was a garden with tropical plants in it, through which people walked, Noah and Moses and Jesus Christ and old Mrs Ashburton.

I could never help thinking that soon the Reverend Throataway would be there too: he was so old and frail, with chalk on the black material of his clothes, sometimes not properly shaved as if he hadn't the energy for it. I found it was a consolation to imagine the Paradise he told us about, with my own God in it, and to imagine Hitler and Goering and Goebbels, with flames all around them, in hell. The more I thought about it all and prayed, the closer I felt to my father. I didn't cry when I thought about him any more, and my mother's face wasn't all pulled down any more. His death was just a fact now, but I didn't ever want not to feel close to him. It was as if being close to him was being close to God also, and I wanted that so that God could answer my prayer about keeping Dick safe in the war. I remembered how Mrs Ashburton had worked it out by the law of averages that some men have to come back from a war, and I suggested to the robed figure in charge of the tropical Paradise that in all fairness our family did not deserve another tragedy. With my eyes tightly closed, in bed at night or suddenly stopping on the journey to school, I repetitiously prayed that Dick would be alive to come back when the war was over. That was all I asked for in the end because I could feel that my father was safe in the eternal life that the Reverend Throataway spoke of, and I didn't ask any more that the war should be over soon in case I was asking too much. I never told anyone about my prayers and I was never caught standing still with my eyes closed on the way to school. My father used to smile at me when I did that and I could faintly hear his voice, teasing Dick about his smoking or teasing my mother about the Aga cooker she wanted, or Betty about almost anything. I felt it was all right when he smiled like that and his voice came back. I felt he was explaining to me that God had agreed to look after us now, provided I prayed properly and often and did not for a single instant doubt that God existed and was in charge. Mrs Ashburton had been doubtful about that last point and had told me so a few times, quite frightening me. But Mrs Ashburton would be in possession of the truth now, and would be forgiven.

My thoughts and my prayers seemed like a kind of world to me, a world full of God, with my father and Mrs Ashburton in their eternal lives, and the happiness that was waiting for the Reverend Throataway in his. It was a world that gradually became as important as the reality around me. It affected everything. It made me different. Belle Frye was still my friend, but I didn't like her the way I once had.

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ONE WET AFTERNOON she and I clambered into Challacombe Manor through a window that someone had smashed. We hadn't been there since the night of the tennis party, when we'd found Mrs Ashburton crying, sitting in the dark in the kitchen. She'd given us pieces of chocolate, and we'd run out into the night, whispering excitedly about an old woman crying just because a party was over. I wouldn't have believed it then if someone had said I'd ever think Belle Frye silly.

"Whoever's going to live here?" she whispered in the dank hall after we'd climbed through the window. "D'you think it'll just fall down?"

"There's a mortgage on it. Lloyd's Bank have it."

"What's that mean then?"

"When the war's finished they'll sell the house off to someone else."

All the furniture in the drawing-room had been taken away, stored in the cellars until someone, someday, had time to attend to it. People had pulled off pieces of the striped red wallpaper, boys from the Grammar School probably. There were names and initials and dates scrawled on the plaster. Hearts with arrows through them had been drawn.

"Anyone could come and live here", Belle Frye said.

"Nobody'd want to."

We walked from room to room. The dining-room still had a sideboard in it. There was blue wallpaper on the walls: none of that had been torn off, but there were patches of damp on it, like great dark blots. There were bundled-up newspapers all over the floor, and empty cardboard boxes that would have been useless for anything because they'd gone soft due to the damp. Upstairs there was a pool of water on a landing and in one of the bedrooms half the ceiling had fallen down. Everywhere there was a musty smell.

"It's haunted", Belle Frye said.

"Of course it isn't."

"She died here, didn't she?"

"That doesn't make it haunted."

"I can feel her ghost."

I knew she couldn't, I thought she was silly to say it, pretending about ghosts just to set a bit of excitement going. She said it again and I didn't answer.

We crawled out again, through the broken window. We wandered about in the rain, looking in the out-houses and the stables. The old motor-car that used to be in one of them had been taken away. The iron roller that Dick had rolled the tennis court with was still there, beside the tennis court itself.

"Let's try in here", Belle Frye said, opening the door of the summer-house.

ALL THE TIMES I'd come into the garden on my own I'd never gone into the summer-house. I'd never even looked through a window of Challacombe Manor itself, or poked about the out-houses. I'd have been a bit frightened, for even though I thought it was silly of Belle Frye to talk about ghosts it wouldn't have surprised me to see a figure moving in the empty house or to have heard something in one of the stables, a tramp maybe or a prisoner escaped from the Italian prisoner-of-war camp five miles away. The Italians were huge black-haired men whom we often met being marched along a road to work in the fields. They always waved and were given to laughing and singing. But even so I wouldn't have cared to meet one on his own.

In the centre of the summer-house was the table that had been covered with a white cloth, with sandwiches and cakes and the tea-urn on it, for the tennis party. The tennis-marker was in a corner, placed there by Dick, I supposed, after he'd marked the court. The tennis-net was beside it, and underneath it, almost hidden by it, were two rugs, one of them brown and white, a kind of Scottish tartan pattern, the other grey. Both of these rugs belonged in our farmhouse. Could they have been lying in the summer-house since the tennis party? I couldn't remember when I'd seen them last.

Facing one another across the table were two chairs which I remembered being there on the day of the party. They were dining-room chairs with red plush seats, brought from the house with a dozen or so others and arrayed on one side of the tennis court so that people could watch the games in comfort. These two must have been left behind when the others had been returned. I was thinking that when I remembered my father hurriedly putting them into the summer-house at the

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end of the day. "It'll maybe rain", he'd said.

"Hey, look", Belle Frye said. She was pointing at an ashtray on the table, with cigarette-butts and burnt-out matches in it. "There's people using this place", she said, giggling. "Maybe an escaped prisoner", she suggested, giggling again.

"Maybe." I said it quickly, not wanting to pursue the subject. I knew the summer-house wasn't being used by an escaped prisoner. Our rugs hadn't been there since the day of the tennis party. They were part of something else, together with the cigarette-butts and the burnt-out matches. And then, quite abruptly, it occurred to me that the summer-house was where Betty and Colin Gregg came when Colin Gregg was on leave: they came to kiss, to cuddle one another like they'd been cuddling in the rhododendrons after the tennis party. Betty had brought the rugs specially, so that they could be warm and comfortable.

"I bet you it's an Eye-tie", Belle Frye said. "I bet you there's one living here."

"Could be."

"I'm getting out of it."

WE RAN away. We ran through the overgrown garden on that wet afternoon, and along the lane that led to the Fryes' farm. I should have turned in the opposite direction after we'd left the garden, but I didn't: I went with her because I didn't want her silliness to spoil everything. I thought it was romantic, Betty and Colin Gregg going to the summer house. I remembered a film called *First Love*, which Betty had gone on about. It had Deanna Durbin in it.

"I'm going to tell", Belle Frye said, stopping for breath before we came to the Fryes' farmyard. Her eyes jangled with excitement. There were drops of moisture in her smooth black hair.

"Let's have it a secret, Belle."

"He could murder you, a blooming Eye-tie."

"It's where my sister and Colin Gregg go." I had to say it because I knew she'd never be able to keep a secret that involved an Italian prisoner of war. I knew that even if no prisoner had escaped people would go to the summer-house to see for themselves. I knew for a fact, I said, that it was where Betty and Colin Gregg went, and if she mentioned it to anyone I'd tell about going into Challacombe Manor through a broken window. She'd said as we'd clambered through it that her father would murder her if he knew. He'd specifically told her that she musn't go anywhere near the empty house because the floor-boards were rotten and the ceilings falling down.

"But why would you tell?" she cried, furious with me. "What d'you want to tell for?"

"It's private about the summer-house. It's a private thing of Betty's."

She began to giggle. We could watch, she whispered. We could watch through the window to see what they got up to. She went on giggling and whispering and I listened to her, not liking her. In the last year or so she'd become like that, repeating the stories she heard from the boys at school, all to do with undressing and peeping. There were rhymes and riddles and jokes that she repeated also, none of them funny. She'd have loved peeping through the summer-house window.

"No", I said. "No."

"But we could. We could wait till he was home on leave. We needn't make a sound." Her voice had become shrill. She was cross with me again, not giggling any more. Her eyes glared at me. She said I was stupid, and then she turned and ran off. I knew she'd never peep through the summer-house window on her own because it wasn't something you could giggle over when you were alone. And I knew she wouldn't try and persuade anyone to go with her because she believed me when I said I'd tell about breaking into Challacombe Manor. Her father was a severe man; she was, fortunately, terrified of him.

I THOUGHT about the summer-house that evening when I was meant to be learning a verse of *The Lady of Shalott* and writing a composition, "The Worst Nightmare I Ever Had." I imagined Betty and Colin Gregg walking hand in hand through the overgrown garden and then slipping into the summer-house when it became dusky. A summer's evening it was, with pink in the sky, and the garden was scented with the blossoms of its shrubs. I imagined them sitting on the two dining-chairs at the table, Colin telling her about the war while he smoked his cigarettes,

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and Betty crying because he would be gone in twelve hours' time and Colin comforting her, and both of them lying down on the rugs so that they could be close enough to put their arms around each other.

In the kitchen while I tried to record the details of a nightmare all I could think about was the much pleasanter subject of my sister's romance. She was in the kitchen also, fair-haired and pretty. She'd changed from her farm-working clothes into a navy-blue skirt and a matching jersey. I thought she was more beautiful than usual. She and my mother were sitting on either side of the range, both of them knitting, my mother reading a book by A. J. Cronin at the same time, my sister occasionally becoming lost in a reverie. I knew what she was thinking about. She was wondering if Colin Gregg was still alive.

Months went by and neither he nor Dick came back. There were letters, but there were also periods when no letters arrived and you could feel the worry, for one of them or the other. The war was going to be longer than everyone had thought. People looked gloomy sometimes, and when I caught their gloom I imagined bodies lying unburied and men in aeroplanes, with goggles on, the aeroplanes on fire and the men in goggles burning to death. Ages ago France had been beaten, and I remembered that in a casual moment in a Divinity class the Reverend Throataway had said that that could never happen, that the French would never give in. We would never give in either, Winston Churchill said, but I imagined the Germans marching on the lanes and the roads and through the fields, not like the cheerful Italians. The Germans were cruel in their helmets and their grey steeliness. They never smiled. They knew you hated them.

Belle Frye would have thought I was mad if I'd told her any of that, just like she'd have thought I was mad if I'd mentioned about praying and keeping my father vivid in my mind. She was the first friend I'd ever had, but the declining of our friendship seemed almost natural now. We had become edgy in one another's company. We still sat next to one another in class, but we didn't always walk home together. Doing that had meant that one of us had to go the long way round, and avoiding this extra journey now became an excuse. Not having had Dick and Betty to walk home with for so long, I'd enjoyed Belle Frye's company, but now I found myself pretending to be in a hurry or just slipping away when she wasn't looking. She didn't seem to mind and we still spent days together, at the weekends or in the holidays. We'd have tea in each other's kitchen, formally invited by our mothers who didn't realise that we weren't such friends. And that was still quite nice.

Sometimes in the evenings my mother used to go and see a woman called Mrs Latham because Mrs Latham was all alone in Burrow Farm, three miles away. On these occasions I always hoped Betty would talk to me about Colin Gregg, that she'd even mention the summer-house. But she never did. She'd sit there knitting, or else writing a letter to him. She'd hear me any homework I had to learn by heart, a theorem or poetry or spelling. She'd make me go to bed, just like my mother did, and then she'd turn on the wireless and listen to *Monday Night at Eight* or *Waterlogged Spa* or *Itma*. She'd become very quiet, less impatient with me than she'd been when we were younger, more grown up, I suppose. I often used to think about her on those nights when my mother was out, when she was left alone in the kitchen listening to the wireless. I used to feel sorry for her in a way.

And then, in that familiar sudden way, Colin Gregg came back on leave.

THAT WAS the beginning of everything. The evening after he came back was a Saturday, an evening in May. I'd been at the Fryes' all afternoon and when we'd finished tea we played cards for an hour or so, and then Mrs Frye said it was time for me to go home. Belle wanted to walk with me, even though we'd probably have walked in silence. I was glad when her father said no. It was too late and in any case he had to go out himself, to set his rabbit snares: he'd walk with me back to our farm. I said good-bye, remembering to thank Mrs Frye, and with his remaining arm Mr Frye pushed his bicycle on the road beside me. He didn't talk at all. He was completely different from my father, never making jokes or teasing. I was quite afraid of him because of his severity.

The sheepdogs barked as I ran across our yard and into the kitchen. My mother had

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said earlier that she intended to go over to see Mrs Latham that evening. By eight o'clock Betty and Colin Gregg were to be back from the half-past four show at the pictures, so that I wouldn't be in the house alone. It was twenty-past eight now, and they weren't there.

I ran back into the yard, wanting to tell Mr Frye, but already he'd cycled out of sight. I didn't at all like the idea of going to bed in the empty house.

I played with the dogs for a while and then I went to look at the hens, and then I decided that I'd walk along the road to meet Betty and Colin Gregg. I kept listening because at night you could always hear the voices of people cycling in the lanes. I kept saying to myself that my mother wouldn't want me to go to bed when there was no one in the farmhouse. It was very still, with bits of red in the sky. I took the short-cut through the garden of Challacombe Manor and I wasn't even thinking about Betty and Colin Gregg when I saw two bicycles in the shrubbery at the back of the summer-house. I didn't notice them at first because they were almost entirely hidden by rhododendron bushes. They reminded me of the rugs half hidden beneath the tennis-net.

Colin Gregg was going away again on Monday. He was being sent somewhere dangerous, he didn't know where, but I'd heard Betty saying to my mother that she could feel in her bones it was dangerous. When my mother had revealed that she intended to visit Mrs Latham that evening I'd said to myself that she'd arranged the visit so that Colin Gregg and Betty could spend the evening on their own in our kitchen. But on the way back from the pictures they'd gone into the summer-house, their special place.

Even now I can't think why I behaved like Belle Frye, unable to resist something. It was a silly curiosity and yet at the time I think it may have seemed more than just that. In some vague way I wanted to have something nice to think about, not just my imagining the war and my prayers for Dick's safety and my concern with people's eternal lives. I wanted to see Betty and Colin Gregg together. I wanted to feel their happiness, and to see it.

It was then, while I was actually thinking that, that I realised something was the matter. I realised I'd been stupid to assume they could take the short-cut through the garden: you couldn't take the short-cut if you were coming from the town on a bicycle because you had to go through fields. You'd come by the lanes, and if you wanted to go to the summer-house you'd have to turn back and go there specially. It seemed all wrong that they should do that when they were meant to be back in the farmhouse by eight o'clock.

I should have turned and gone away. In the evening light I was unable to see the bicycles clearly, but even so I was aware that neither of them was Betty's. They passed out of my sight as I approached one of the summer-house's two small windows.

I could see nothing. Voices murmured, not saying anything, just quietly making sounds. Then a man's voice spoke more loudly, but I still couldn't hear what was being said. A match was struck and in a sudden vividness I saw a hand and a packet of Player's cigarettes on the table, and then I saw my mother's face. Her reddish hair was untidy and she was smiling. The hand that had been on the table put a cigarette between her lips and another hand held the match to it. I had never in my life seen my mother smoking a cigarette before.

The match went out and when another one was struck it lit up the face of a man who worked in Blow's drapery. My mother and he were sitting facing one another at the table, in the two chairs with the red plush seats.

BETTY WAS FRYING eggs at the range when I returned to the kitchen. Colin Gregg had had a puncture in his back tyre. They hadn't even looked yet to see if I was upstairs. I said we'd all forgotten the time at the Fryes', playing cards.

In bed I kept remembering that my mother's eyes had been different, not like they'd been for a long time, two dark-blue sparks. I kept saying to myself that I should have recognised her bicycle in the bushes because its mudguards were shaped like a V, not rounded like the mudguards of modern bicycles.

I heard Colin and Betty whispering in the yard and then the sound of his bicycle as he rode away and then, almost immediately, the sound of my mother's bicycle and Betty saying something quietly and my mother quietly replying. I heard them coming to bed,

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Betty first and my mother twenty minutes later. I didn't sleep, and for the first time in my life I watched the sky becoming brighter when morning began to come. I heard my mother getting up and going out to do the milking.

At breakfast-time it was as though none of it had happened, as though she had never sat on the red plush chair in the summer-house, smoking cigarettes and smiling at a man from a shop. She ate porridge and brown bread, reading a book: *Victoria Four-Twenty* by Cecil Roberts. She reminded me to feed the hens and she asked Betty what time Colin Gregg was coming over. Betty said any minute now and began to do the washing up. When Colin Gregg came he mended one of the cow-house doors.

That day was horrible. Betty tried to be cheerful, upset because Colin Gregg was being sent to somewhere dangerous. But you could feel the effort of her trying and when she thought no one was looking, when my my mother and Colin were talking to one another, her face became unhappy. I couldn't stop thinking about my father. Colin Gregg went back to the war.

A MONTH went by. My mother continued to say she was going to see Mrs Latham and would leave Betty and me in the kitchen about once a week.

"Whatever's the matter with Matilda?" I heard Betty saying to her once, and later my mother asked me if I had a stomach ache. I used to sit there at the table trying to understand simultaneous equations, imagining my mother in the summer-house, the two bicycles half hidden in the bushes, the cigarettes and the ashtray.

"The capital of India", I would say. "Don't tell me; I know it."

"Begins with a 'B' ", Betty would prompt.

He came to the kitchen one evening. He ate cabbage and baked potatoes and fish pie, chewing the cabbage so carefully you couldn't help noticing. He was thin, with one eye that was funny, dead or crooked or something, and a bony nose. His teeth were narrowly crowded, his whole face pulled out to an edge, like the head of a hatchet. His hair was jet black, parted in the middle and oiled. His hands were clean, with tapering fingers. I was told his name but I didn't listen, not wishing to know it.

"Where d'you get the fish?" he asked my mother in a casual way.

His head was cocked a little to one side. He was smiling with his narrow teeth, making my mother flustered as she used to get in the past, when my father was alive. She was even beginning to blush, not that I could see a cause for it. She said:

"Betty, where did you get the cod?"

"Timpson's", Betty said.

Betty smiled at him and my mother said quickly that Timpson's were always worth trying in case they'd got any fish in, although of course you could never tell. It sounded silly the way she said it.

"I like fish", he said.

"We must remember that."

"They say it's good for you", Betty said.

"I always liked fish", the man said. "From a child I've enjoyed it."

"Eat it up now", my mother ordered me.

"Don't you like fish, Matilda?" he said.

Betty laughed. "Matilda doesn't like lots of things. Fish, carrots, eggs. Semolina. Ground rice. Custard. Baked apples, gravy, cabbage."

He laughed, and my mother laughed. I bent my head over the plate I was eating from. My face had gone as hot as a fire.

"Unfortunately there's a war on", he said. "Hard times, Matilda."

I considered that rude. It was rude the way he'd asked where the fish had come from. He was stupid, as well. Who wanted to hear that he liked fish? He was a fool, like Stupid Miller who'd been at Miss Pritchard's Primary. He was ridiculous-looking and ugly, with his pointed face and crushed-together teeth. He'd no right to say there was a war on since he wasn't fighting in it.

They listened to the News on the wireless and afterwards they listened to the national anthems of the countries which were fighting against Germany. He offered my mother and Betty cigarettes and they both took one. I'd never seen Betty smoking a cigarette before. He'd brought a bottle of some kind of drink with him. They drank it sitting by the range, still listening to the national anthems.

"Good night, Matilda", he said, standing up when my mother told me it was time to go to bed. He kissed me on the cheek and I could feel his damp teeth. I didn't move for a

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moment after he'd done that, standing quite close to him because I thought I was going to bring up the fish pie and if I did I wanted to cover his clothes with it. I wouldn't have cared. I wouldn't have been embarrassed.

I HEARD Betty coming to bed and then I lay for hours, waiting for the sound of his bicycle going away. I couldn't hear their voices downstairs, the way I'd been able to hear voices when Betty had been there. Betty's had become quite loud and she'd laughed repeatedly. I guessed they'd been playing cards, finishing off the bottle of drink he'd bought. When I'd been there Betty had suggested rummy and he'd said that not a drop of the drink must be left. He'd kept filling up Betty's and my mother's glasses, saying the stuff was good for you.

I crossed the landing to the top of the stairs that led straight down into the kitchen. I thought they must have fallen asleep by the range because when a board creaked beneath my feet no one called out. I stood at the turn of the narrow staircase, peering through the shadows at them.

Betty had taken one of the two lamps with her as she always did. The kitchen was dim, with only the glow from the other. On the table, close to the lamp, was the bottle and one of the glasses they'd drunk from. The two dogs were stretched in front of the range. My mother was huddled on the man's knee. I could see his tapering fingers, one hand on the black material of her dress, the other stroking her hair. While I watched he kissed her, bending his damp mouth down to her lips and keeping it there. Her eyes were closed but his were open, and when he finished kissing her he stared at her face.

I went on down the stairs, shuffling my bare feet to make a noise. The dogs growled, pricking up their ears. My mother was halfway across the kitchen, tidying her hair with both hands, murmuring at me.

"Can't you sleep, love?" she said. "Have you had a dream?"

I shook my head. I wanted to walk forward, past her to the table. I wanted to pick up the bottle he'd brought and throw it on to the flags of the floor. I wanted to shout at him that he was ugly, no more than a half-wit, no better than Stupid Miller who hadn't been allowed in the Grammar School. I wanted to say no one was interested in his preference for fish.

My mother put her arms around me. She felt warm from sitting by the range, but I hated the warmth because it had to do with him. I pushed by her and went to the sink. I drank some water even though I wasn't thirsty. Then I turned and went upstairs again.

"She's sleepy", I heard my mother say. "She often gets up for a drink when she's sleepy. You'd better go, dear."

He muttered something else and my mother said that they must have patience.

"One day", she said. "After it's all over."

"It'll never end." He spoke loudly, not muttering any more. "This bloody thing could last for ever."

"No, no, my dear."

"It's all I want, to be here with you."

"It's what I want too. But there's a lot in the way."

"I don't care what's in the way."

"We have to care, dear."

"I love you", he said.

"My own darling", my mother said.

SHE WAS THE SAME as usual the next day, presumably imagining that being half asleep I hadn't noticed her sitting on the man's knees and being kissed by his mouth. In the afternoon I went into the summer-house. I looked at the two plush-seated chairs, imagining the figures of my mother and the man on them. I carried the chairs, one by one, to an out-house and up a ladder to a loft. I put the tennis-net underneath some seed boxes. I carried the two rugs to the well in the cobbled yard and dropped them down it. I returned to the summer-house, thinking of doing something else, I wasn't sure what. There was a smell of stale tobacco, coming from the butts in the ashtray. On the floor I found a tie-pin with a greyhound's head on it and I thought the treacherous, ugly-looking dog suited him. I threw it into the rhododendron shrubbery.

"Poor chap", I heard Betty saying that evening. "It's a horrid thing to have." She'd always noticed that he looked delicate, she added.

"He doesn't get enough to eat", my mother said.

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In spite of her sympathy, you could see that Betty wasn't much interested in the man: she was knitting and trying to listen to *Bandwagon*. As far as Betty was concerned he was just some half-sick man whom my mother felt sorry for, the way she was supposed to feel sorry for Mrs Latham of Burrow Farm. But my mother wanted to go on talking about him, with a pretended casualness. It wasn't the right work for a person who was tubercular, she said, serving in a shop.

I imagined him in Blow's, selling pins and knitting-needles and satin by the yard. I thought the work suited him, like the greyhound's head tie-pin did.

"What's it mean, tubercular?" I asked Belle Frye, and she said it meant you suffered from a disease in your lungs.

"I expect you could fake it."

"What'd you want to do that for?"

"To get out of the war. Like Mrs Laze shot off Roger Laze's foot."

"Who's faking it then?"

"That man in Blow's."

I couldn't help myself: I wanted it to be known that he was faking a disease in his lungs. I wanted Belle Frye to tell people, to giggle at him in Blow's, pointing him out. But in fact she wasn't much interested. She nodded, and then shrugged in a jerky way she had, which meant she was impatient to be talking about something else. You could tell she didn't know the man in Blow's had become a friend of my mother's. She hadn't seen them on their bicycles; she wouldn't have wanted to change the subject if she'd looked through the summer-house window and seen them with their cigarettes. Before that I hadn't thought about her finding out, but now I wondered if perhaps she would some time, and if other people would. I imagined the giggling and the jokes made up by the boys in the Grammar School, and the severity of Mr Frye, and the astonishment of people who had liked my father.

I prayed that none of that would happen. I prayed that the man would go away, or die. I prayed that my mother would be upset again because my father had been killed in the war, that she would remember the time when he had been in the farmhouse with us. I prayed that whatever happened she could never discredit him by allowing the man from Blow's to be there in the farmhouse, wearing my father's clothes.

Every day I prayed in the summer-house, standing close to the table with my eyes closed, holding on to the edge of it. I went there specially, and more vividly than ever I could see my father in the tropical garden of his eternal life. I could see old Mrs Ashburton walking among the plants with her husband, happy to be with him again. I could see the bearded face of the Almighty I prayed to, not smiling but seeming kind.

"OH, MY GOD", was all my mother could say, whispering it between her bursts of tears. "Oh, my God."

Betty was crying too, but crying would do no good. I stood there between them in the kitchen, feeling I would never cry again. The telegram was still on the table, its torn envelope beside it. It might have said that Dick was coming home on leave, or that Colin Gregg was. It looked sinister on the table because Dick was dead.

I might have said to my mother that it was my fault as well as hers. I might have said that I'd known I should pray only for Dick to be safe and yet hadn't been able to prevent myself praying for the other, too: that she'd be as she used to be, that she wouldn't ever marry the man from Blow's.

But I didn't say that. I didn't say I'd prayed about the man, I just said it was a Thursday again.

"Thursday?" my mother whispered, and when I explained she didn't understand. She hadn't even noticed that the two times my father had come home it had been a Thursday and that the tennis party had been on a Thursday and that the other telegram had come on a Thursday too. She shook her head, as if denying all this repetition, and I wanted to hurt her when she did that because the denial seemed all part and parcel of the summer-house and the man from Blow's. More deliberately than a moment ago I again didn't confess that I had ceased to concentrate on Dick's safety in my prayers. Instead I said that in a war against the Germans you couldn't afford to take chances, you couldn't go kissing a man when your husband had been killed.

"Oh, my God", my mother said again.

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Betty was staring at her, tears still coming from her eyes, bewildered because she'd never guessed about my mother and the man.

"It has nothing to do with this", my mother whispered. "Nothing."

I thought Betty was going to attack her, maybe hammer at her face with her fists, or scratch her cheeks. But she only cried out, shrieking like some animal caught in a trap. The man was even married, she shrieked: his wife was away in the Women's Army. It was horrible, worse than ever when you thought of that. She pointed at me and said I was right: Dick's death was a judgment, things happened like that.

My mother didn't say anything. She stood there, white-faced, and then she said the fact that the man was married didn't make anything worse.

She spoke to Betty, looking at her, not at me. Her voice was quiet. She said the man intended to divorce his wife when the war came to an end. Of course what had happened wasn't a judgment.

"You won't marry him now", Betty said, speaking as quietly.

My mother didn't reply. She stood there by the table and there was a silence. Then she said again that Dick's death and the man were two different things. It was terrible, she said, to talk as we were talking at a time like this. Dick was dead: that was the only thing that mattered.

"They used to go in the summer-house", I said. "They had two of our rugs there."

My mother turned her head away, and I wanted Betty to remember as I was remembering, and I believe she did. I could sense her thinking of the days when my father was alive, when Dick used to smoke cigarettes on the way home from school, when we were all together in the farmhouse, not knowing we were happy. That time seemed to haunt the kitchen just then, as if my mother was thinking about it too, as if our remembering had willed it back.

"He could never come here now", Betty said to my mother. "You couldn't do it to Matilda."

I didn't know why she should have particularly mentioned me since it concerned us all, and anyway I felt it was too late to bother about me. Too much had happened. I felt I'd been blown to pieces, as if I'd been in the war myself, as if I'd been defeated by it, as old Mrs Ashburton had been defeated by her war. The man would come to live in the farmhouse. He would wear my father's clothes. He would sit by the range, reading the newspaper. He would eat at the table, and smile at me with his narrow teeth.

My mother left the kitchen. She went upstairs and after a few minutes we heard her sobbing in her bedroom. Sobbing would do no good, I thought, any more than crying would.

I WALKED by myself through the fields. Dick's death wasn't the same as my father's. There was the same emptiness and the same feeling that I never wanted to eat anything again or to drink anything again, but it was different because this was the second time. Dick was dead and we'd get used to it: that was something I knew now.

I didn't cry and I didn't pray. Praying seemed nonsense as I walked through the fields; praying was as silly as Belle Frye's thinking that God was a carpenter or the Reverend Throataway saying God was in weeds. God wasn't like that in the least. He wasn't there to listen to what you prayed for. God was something else, something harder and more awful and more frightening.

I should have known that the man from Blow's would be married, that he'd have a wife who was helping in the war while he was going on about a disease. It was somehow all of a piece with Betty wanting to hit my mother, and Mrs Laze shooting off her son's foot so that he could stay alive, and God being frightening. Facts and images rattled in my mind, senselessly jumbled, without rhyme or reason. Dick was there too, dead and unburied in his uniform, something ordinary to get used to.

I sat in the sunshine on a bank that had primroses on it. I could have returned to the farmhouse and let my mother put her arms around me, but I continued to sit there, still not crying, remembering Mrs Ashburton saying that cruelty in wartime was natural. At the time I hadn't understood what she'd meant, but I could feel the cruelty she'd spoken of now. I could feel it in myself, in my wanting my mother to be more unhappy than I was. Dick's death was more bearable because she could be blamed, as Betty had blamed her in speaking of a judgment.

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Kenneth Minogue

Galbraith's Wit & Unwisdom

Ordeal by Caricature

"WE ALL HAVE COURAGE ENOUGH to endure the troubles of others", wrote La Rochefoucauld in a famous maxim, and from this simple germ of 17th-century cynicism John Kenneth Galbraith has evolved a way of understanding men and ideas. The resulting view of human life may be detected in much that he has written, but it surfaces unmistakably in *The Age of Uncertainty*,[1] the coffee-table book which comes in the wake of his recent Anglo-American television series devoted to the popularisation of economics and seen by tens of millions on both sides of the Atlantic.

But given that Galbraith is an economist, why should we bother with his view of human reality?

The answer is that the greater part of *The Age of Uncertainty* consists not of economics but of moral and social theorising. For perhaps a dozen pages of the book, he makes a stab at explaining the economic doctrines of such men as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and John Maynard Keynes; and in the case of Irving Fisher's monetary theory he even produces an equation to discuss. But these forays into actual economic theory are notably worse written than the rest; and Keynes, for example, is tossed off in two rather cavalier paragraphs. The rest is anecdote. Nor is it even true that Galbraith has, for purposes of popularisation, transposed economics into the narrative of economic history. The development of America, for example, is a saga of greedy and criminal railroad-promoters, and the awful vulgarity of the poodle parties of Mrs Stuyvesant Fish, of Newport (Rhode Island). No, if Galbraith ever was much interested in economics, he now seems to have given it up in favour of punditry.

His vision of human life rests upon two fundamental beliefs: that most men are both fools and knaves; and that all ideas are about policy, and generally serve to justify policies which are foolish or immoral, and usually both. What, for example, was the achievement of David Ricardo?

> "He did provide the rich with a very satisfactory formula for suffering the misfortunes of the poor."

And Herbert Spencer?

> "These ideas couldn't, in fact, have been more wonderful. Never before in any country had so many been so rich or enjoyed their wealth so much. And in consequence of Spencer no one needed to feel the slightest guilt over this good fortune. It was the inevitable result of natural strength, inherent capacity to adapt. The rich man was the innocent beneficiary of his own superiority."

Or again, why did Turgot fail to reform the finances of France?

> "A firm rule operated against him. People of privilege will always risk their complete destruction rather than surrender any material part of their advantage."

Even Adam Smith appears as an advocate rather than an analyst of self-interest and its place in a competitive economic system.

SUCH IS GALBRAITH'S VIEW of the rich and the powerful, the class of people he most loves to hate. His passion to deride this class of person, a passion which often descends to cheap sneers, is seen at its most intense in dealing with the *arriviste* capitalists of late 19th-century America. Much fun is had at the expense of these *parvenu* millionaires, imagining themselves loved by their servants—only to be subject to the ultimate indignity of being farted at and then abandoned. Can this really be? Hearken to the text:

> "It may be laid down as a broad and general rule that no one spends his life affirming the superiority of other people if he has any alternative. So, at the earliest moment, the servants got other jobs. The masters thought they were loved until the day one of their favourites farted loudly while serving dinner and the next day was gone. The very first manifestation of the classless society is the disappearance of the servant class."

Actually, these servants were so respectful of their masters that, ashamed at the solecism they had committed, they slunk away rather than face up to their disgrace.... Is such an alternative view implausible? No more so than that offered by Galbraith himself. For we have no reason for thinking these American millionaires to have been

[1] *The Age of Uncertainty*. By JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH. André Deutsch/BBC Publications £7.25; Houghton Mifflin, $17.95.

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such sentimental boobies other than Galbraith's own imaginative flights.

But this example does help us to understand a further feature of his vision of the world: to generate his particular style of supercilious wit, he must present people as holding unlikely beliefs, and experiencing unlikely emotions. Chins and stomachs thus protruding as a result of Galbraithian caricature, they are ready for the crisp Galbraithian *one-two*, or *K.O.* by epigram.

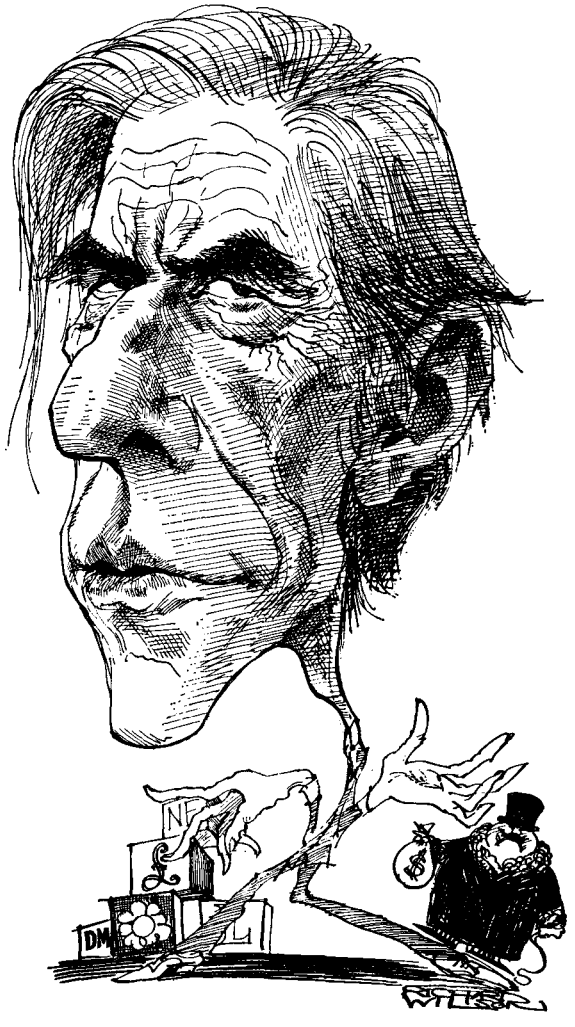
> "Few can believe that suffering, especially by others, is in vain. Anything that is disagreeable must surely have beneficial economic effects. . . ."

But where are these believers in the pure beneficence of suffering by others? You certainly don't meet them every day.

It is, of course, a very useful rhetorical trick to attribute a capacity for complacent self-deception to the rest of the human race, in order, then, to exhibit one's own superiority. Intellectuals, Galbraith tells us,

> "have usually thought themselves disliked because others were jealous of their brains. More often it's because they make trouble."

It would be easy to go on assembling these *mots* which are to be found in every chapter; but it is unnecessary. One or two of them sufficiently reveal how easy it is to be wise if one is constantly tossing up idiocies to be controverted. Part of Galbraith's celebrity, one of the things for which he will have to answer in one of the lesser courts of the Last Judgment, is his invention of the concept of "the conventional wisdom", a device by which dull unimaginative men may present themselves as fresh and fearless critics by the simple device of parodying the case they have to meet.



The Age of Uncertainty, then, subjects the rich and powerful of the last two centuries to what can only be called trial by caricature, Professors, railroad-promoters, managers, and bureaucrats (with a modest partial exception for directors of price-control agencies) are subjected to a barrage of gay and witty sallies. Intrepid in impartiality, Galbraith does not even exempt the "brainless" upper-class generals of the First World War. Everywhere we find vulgarity, stupidity, and knavishness. But that forces upon us an overwhelming question: Why, if the world is this kind of madhouse full of suffering, is Galbraith not the most passionate misanthrope of the age? Why is it that a man so keen to rehearse once again the horrors of the dark satanic mills, the Irish potato famine, and the slaughter of the First World War can manage to be so relentlessly *genial*?

The best answer seems to be that Galbraith doesn't really believe all this. The images and assertions which, to a morally serious reader, would be an invitation to pessimism and gloom are for Galbraith merely an opportunity for the exhibition of enlightened wit. What we confront is a rhetorical device passing itself off as an understanding of man and society. The horrors of the past (and the present) are no doubt real enough, but for Galbraith they are nothing more than confirmation of his favourite belief in the silliness of most of the human race. But there is one class of person largely exempt from mockery; the poor and the weak, who have throughout history suffered from the folly of the rich and the powerful. Whereas the one class has foolish thoughts and no feelings, the other class has suffering feelings, and no ascertainable ideas.

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The poor and the weak have suffered throughout history from the iniquities of the rich and powerful partly because the latter are callous and foolish, and partly because social inequality has cast all human beings in the role either of oppressors, or of victims. In Galbraith's world, there are three classes of people, the rich and powerful being one of them, and the suffering masses the second. The third class, as we shall see presently, consists of enlightened people like John Kenneth Galbraith himself. When he contemplates the migration of millions of people from Europe to America, what impresses him is not the fact that such immigrants took their destinies into their own hands and built up a new civilisation, but the fact that they suffered at the hands of vulgar millionaires.

On the other hand, when he discusses East Berlin, he is impressed not at all that its inhabitants are imprisoned behind a Wall, but by the fact that they are involved in an industrial process leading to the satisfaction of their needs, and that this process will make their lives converge with those of the automobile workers of Gary, Indiana. The whole passage is revealing:

> "It is tempting to see in modern Berlin the dramatically visible manifestation of the transformation which was Marx's great preoccupation. The place to view it is on the Wall. On one side is West Berlin; this is the embattled outpost of the capitalist world. On the other side is the next stage: there the triumphant masses. For years all excessively articulate visitors to Berlin have been seeing precisely this, although those viewing the Wall from the West have usually spoken of democracy, not capitalism, and few have conceded the inevitability of the transformation unless it be out of weakness. Still, the contrast is accepted; Marx has had an enormous success in the rhetoric of the Wall.
>
> "I've long believed, alas, that in highly organized industrial societies, capitalist or socialist, the stronger tendency is to convergence—that if steel or automobiles are wanted and must be made on a large scale, the process will stamp its imprint on the society, whether that be Magnetogorsk, or Gary, Indiana. If so, the Wall is not a place of historic confrontation; rather, as those on each side become aware of their higher commitment to the mass production of goods and to the vast and intricate organization that this requires, it will become progressively less important. It is hard, visiting West and East Berlin, to believe that this is not already happening. The preoccupation with the production of goods and the practical productive arrangements are becoming more, not less, alike."

There has been plenty of discussion of the horrors of the Berlin Wall; and we need not expect Galbraith, however much he makes use of materials for indignation in other contexts, to add to this particular chorus. There is, however, something distinctly Panglossian about the philosopher standing by a Wall where every so often some wretch is shot down by the border guards as he tries to make his exit, and discoursing about the *fundamental* similarity of the tendencies operating on both sides of the offending barrier. Those "excessively articulate visitors" (dismissed in a typical sneer) are not to be so easily ignored. For when they talk of democracy and human rights, they are pointing to a feature of life to which Galbraith himself is evidently blind. The only conclusion we may draw from the "convergence thesis" as Galbraith uses it is that his conception of human life is such as to make it impossible for him to distinguish very clearly between a man and a battery hen.

GALBRAITH IS A technological determinist who believes that as a man produces, so he is. He believes, as he has said in another place,[2] that

> "all governments, in our time, are vast organisations which have their own dynamic and which more than presidents, prime ministers or chancellors are what now rule. To change presidents or prime ministers is not to change the organisation."

Given such an underlying logic of affairs, what price democracy? As he has also said, it hardly matters who gets elected. How Lilliputian this Gulliver finds the simple political enthusiasms and preferences of ordinary men!

And starting from the fundamental premise that man's need for mass-produced cars is the key determinant, it follows that there can be no significant difference between human life in Magnetogorsk and in Gary, Indiana. As long as men's needs are satisfied and they are saved from the misery of having to contemplate the superiority of others, then surely it hardly matters whether they exercise such freedoms as those of religion, speech, and movement. Galbraith would presumably repudiate such a conclusion being drawn from his work; but it is notable that, however wide-ranging, indeed self-indulgent, his survey of the last two centuries of Western civilisation has been, it finds no place for the mention of such freedoms as these. No doubt they are part of the "self-interest" which messes up the operation of that organisational dynamic which so impressed him.

Galbraith is superior to all irrationalities among the Lilliputians with whom he deals. His comment on the Indian annexation of Goa in 1961 is a good illustration of his capacity for disregarding the actual desires people may have:

> "There was no obvious reason, its greater antiquity (from 1510) apart, why it should not have become part of the Indian union, along with the British and French India . . . at the time of Independence . . . . Though extensively converted to Christianity, the Goanese are not ethnically distinct from the other people of India."[3]

The religion, the *mere* beliefs men have, is as

[2] *Sunday Times*, 15 May 1977.
[3] *Ambassador's Journal* (London, 1969), p. 274n.

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nothing compared to the "dynamic" of ethnicity, or race, or perhaps mere organisational tidiness.

A TENDENCY TO DISREGARD the beliefs which constitute human action can also be seen at work when Galbraith deals with something he calls "Colonialism." This is, of course, a political word used both to describe comprehensively and to castigate totally a complex series of events relating Europe to the rest of the world from the 16th to the 20th centuries. Like the politicians who use the word, Galbraith treats "Colonialism" as a single homogeneous experience combining greed and stupidity in equal measure. Typically, he associates it with beliefs which cannot but be vulnerable to the fashions of the 1970s: belief in the superiority of Western civilisation and the necessity of bringing Christianity to the heathen. This is in fact a gross caricature of a history which, as in most human things, combines evil and idealism in many and varied ways. But Galbraith carries the blanketing comprehensiveness of the term one stage beyond what usually happens even in the most demogogic treatments of Colonialism. He takes it to extend from the Crusades to Viet Nam; and while both of these episodes of European history have indefensible aspects, neither of them quite fits into even the exiguous descriptive specifications of the idea of Colonialism. Galbraith is in fact talking about human aggression, and he has in this area extended his intellectual disdain for the rich and the powerful to Europeans in general.

STUPIDITY, which is a blunt and abusive word, is the underlying presupposition of Galbraith's ideas. We have already met stupidity as covering any foolish policy resulting from privileged men clinging to their privileges even when they are already doomed by the organisational dynamic. But can we find any clear specification of the peculiar sense that this commonplace word has in Galbraith's work? I think we can. It becomes clear when he is discussing the qualities that are most important to political leadership, and to the kind of education it requires. One of these qualities is a commitment to solving by all necessary means the major anxieties of the day:

> "To understand the importance of commitment is to see in full perspective the problems we have here been discussing. Few, if any, are difficult of solution. The difficulty, all but invariably, is in confronting them. We know what needs to be done; for reasons of inertia, pecuniary interest, passion or ignorance, we do not wish to say so. . . ."

Here we find the fundamental proposition that underlies most of what Galbraith has to say. There is a transparent truth available to some intelligent men, and the troubles of the world come from the fact that most men are too stupid, or too self-serving, or both, to see it, and particularly to act upon it. Truth, as Galbraith says, "has a wonderful clarity of line." Stupidity is the failure to see, and to act upon, this transparent truth.

But who actually does see it? Galbraith himself obviously does, and some of his heroes, like Thorstein Veblen and Maynard Keynes, are allowed at least a partial illumination. Some politicians like Nehru and Kennedy are worthy members of the élite group of the non-stupid. And, one should undoubtedly add, the reader of a book by Galbraith is implicitly invited to join this select club. Part of Galbraith's charm consists in his tendency to flatter the reader into agreeing with him. And this is important because, as I have suggested throughout, there is an intimate connection between what Galbraith actually believes, and the rhetorical devices by which he expresses it. There are even cases, as we have seen, where a substantive belief such as that in the vicious venality of the rich and the powerful must be seen as primarily a literary springboard for taking up witty and superior attitudes rather than as an entirely serious judgment on world history. Stupidity, then, characterises much of human history, but must be juxtaposed against the superior insight of those who have at last grasped the transparent truth, and who are thus enabled to rise above petty political prejudices such as a dislike of communism. As Milton Friedman has pointed out,[4] Galbraith is like John Stuart Mill in his tendency to posit a clerisy of superior beings who ought to solve the world's problems and organise the satisfaction of the needs of ordinary men. This is why he may be described both as a socialist and as a liberal.

What are these transparent truths which men seek to evade? They are of quite surpassing generality. This small planet, we learn, cannot survive a nuclear exchange—no one, not even the rich and powerful, would be safe if the Bomb dropped. Or: cities need money if they are not to degenerate into slums, and the poor would be less deprived if they were given more income. Such insights are indeed transparent, for they are very nearly vacuous. Truths of this kind and at this level would be affirmed by most democratic majorities, and not merely by the Swiss whom he sets up as a democratic example to us all.

But the problems that actually face the politicians of the world are not, of course, at this level. They are more nearly to be found in the small print of such things as the SALT agreement, or in the communal hatreds of places like Ulster, Cyprus and the Middle East. One of Galbraith's

[4] *From Galbraith to Economic Freedom* (I.E.A., 1977), p. 30–31.

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synonyms for the stupidity he has spent his life castigating is "evasion." It is a charge that may be boomeranged back at Galbraith himself. He exercises his superiority at precisely the level of affairs where the real problems are not to be found.

GALBRAITH'S THOUGHT, then, revolves around the relations to each other of three classes of men: the rich and powerful, the masses who merely suffer, and the enlightened whose influence he thinks has been growing in the world these two centuries and more. The picture of the modern world that results is historically anachronistic and politically pernicious.

It is historically anachronistic because Galbraith judges the men of any epoch not in terms of their relations to their own past, but in relation to a future that could not have been foreseen. The conditions of labour, and the moral character of employers, are vulnerable to derision if we see them in terms of modern conditions and modern expectations. They are very much less vulnerable if we think of them as a great achievement in relation to the famine-ridden world of the 17th and 18th centuries. To present the rich and the powerful of the last century as the mindless puppets of their own self-interest may make Galbraith's readers imagine that we have made some progress since then; but it is simply untrue that wisdom, wit, benevolence and a sense of compassion for the suffering of others are the monopoly of our own enlightened times. The fundamental defect of truth's "wonderful clarity of line" as the thread to guide us in understanding the past is that it cannot comprehend the actual world in which human beings live: a world in which they are constantly making moral choices in difficult situations.[5]

One is driven to take up a moral criticism of what Galbraith has to say, because in the end it is the sheer moral vacuity of his entire conception of human life which begins to resonate through the mechanical wit of this genial guide to the follies of mankind. By the simple devices of first attributing silly opinions and feelings to people, and then showing up the silliness, he manages to make people look like fools. But in doing so he is insensitive to the fact that precisely this distortion of the past is one of the main adjuncts of modern despotism. All dictatorial régimes depend upon trumpeting the fact that they have saved the populace from a dismal past, and this is as true of Franco supposedly saving the Spaniards from the horrors of civil war, as it is of the Russians drugged since 1917 by the dope of a distorted picture of the horrors of Czardom. Since what Galbraith writes about the past has not the remotest connection with the real historical past, we must understand it as legendary; and as political legend it serves only the basest and the most superficial of modern pretensions.

When he comes to deal with the McCarthyism of the 1950s in the United States—a subject which turns up in the book, not because it has anything to do with economics, but because it is an important compartment of Galbraith's inner life—he remarks that some of the Senators of the Un-American Activities Committee could not tell the difference between a Marxist and a Keynesian. It would be hard to find anything good to say of these latter-day inquisitors, but Galbraith seems to have stumbled across it. It is true that, if Marxism means a set of doctrines such as the class war, the crisis of capitalism, and the labour theory of value then indeed it would be an egregious mistake to confuse such things with the economics of Keynes. But Marxism has in our century become the emblem of a socially determinist vision of life, one in which men are merely the function of their mode of production, and ideas merely ideologies. If Marxism is taken in this extended sense, and if Galbraith is a Keynesian, then the Committee on Un-American Activities did have a point. For the vision of human life propagated by Galbraith, and merely disguised by his wit and geniality, is "Marxist" in the worst sense. Marx himself did at least recognise that the triviality of a conception of human life as mere production needed to be relieved by some kind of wider resonance. He provided the metaphysical melodrama of the class struggle, the crisis of a dying capitalism (which is, of course, conceptually built in to his conception of capitalism itself), and the dawning revolution. By contrast with the beliefs that men in earlier centuries have lived by, it is exiguous enough, and the dreary banality of life in Communist lands testifies to its inadequacy. But it is at least a little better than a technological determinism complicated by nothing more than self-interested stupidity; and that, alas, is all we find in Galbraith. Even his geniality of manner and his eager flattery of the reader cannot conceal that the emptiness of his vision of human life takes us one step nearer the abyss of moral vacuity to which so much in the modern world beckons us.

Galbraith's aphorisms about human folly often read, as I have suggested, like a pale shadow of La Rochefoucauld. And it is perhaps La Rochefoucauld who can explain the emptiness of Galbraith's vision: "Philosophy triumphs easily over past evils and evils to come, but present evils triumph over it."

[5] Choice, it will be evident, is something Galbraith often sells short. Consider a typical remark: "As often in these matters, we imagine choice—scope for ideological preference—when, in fact, there is little or none."

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Elie Kedourie

How Britain is Governed Now

The Crossman Confessions

IN THE INTRODUCTION to the first volume of his *Diaries*[1] Richard Crossman (1907–1974) tells us that in keeping such a record his purpose was to uncover the secret operations of government which are habitually concealed "by the thick masses of foliage which we call the myth of democracy." By disclosing the secret reality behind the deceptive appearance the *Diaries* were to make their author the Walter Bagehot of his age. For the greater part of his life Crossman had been a don and a journalist, and the aspiration to be a 20th-century Bagehot clearly meant a great deal to him. So much so that we find him remarking in November 1966—when he was Lord President and a prominent member of Harold Wilson's administration—that "there's no doubt that politically too my ability to write a major book and the existence of Prescote [his country house and farm] combine to give me an increasing detachment from the Cabinet."

Crossman died without fulfilling his ambition, but the 1,500 pages of the first two volumes of the *Diaries* are enough to persuade us that here is a veritable Aladdin's cave for which a latter-day Bagehot, as articulate and weighty, as concise and witty as his predecessor (and for him, truly, among today's writers on the Constitution we shall have to search with an Aladdin's lamp), will be grateful.

IN THE LARGE HEAP OF confidential gossip, administrative anecdotes, and political reflections which this privileged chronicler has left behind him, the modern Bagehot will find much that is instructive and enlightening, and much that will give rise to wry amusement and rueful irony. One theme which emerges from the *Diaries*—no doubt unintentionally—he will find particularly striking. In 1939 the young Crossman, then Assistant Editor of the *New Statesman and Nation*, published a small volume entitled *How Britain is Governed*. The ideas rehearsed in this work were the common coin of Leftist argument: that Britain was a "plutocracy" at the mercy of "financial and industrial dictators"; that the wealthy, in the name of liberty and private enterprise, impeded the "will of the people"; that civil servants, "far removed from the life and ideas of the mass of the people", are employed "to keep the present machine in running order"; and that, therefore, they are unable "to reconstruct our society upon the principles of scientific planning."

The ideas expressed in this opuscule are now much more familiar and prevalent than when Crossman was helping to spread them. And some of them have, appropriately enough, found dignified lodgment in a state paper produced during, and under the aegis of, the administration to which Crossman was later to belong. The view that the civil service was remote from ordinary people and unfit to carry out "scientific planning" was authoritatively asserted by the Report of the Fulton Committee on the Civil Service which was set up in 1966. The Report, published in 1968, complained that the "social and educational base" of the civil service was still too narrow, and asserted that its "exclusiveness" and "isolation" hindered "a full understanding" of contemporary problems and of the outside world. To remedy this state of affairs, the Committee recommended a recruitment policy which would render the service "more representative, geographically, educationally and socially, of the nation at large than they have been in the past."

There is little doubt that the Committee was indebted for these ideas to a social survey of the civil service which it had commissioned from two academics, Dr A. H. Halsey and Mr I. M. Crewe.[2] These two investigators made the dis-

[1] *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister:* vol. 1, *Minister of Housing 1964–6*; vol. 2, *Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons 1966–68*. By R. H. S. CROSSMAN. Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, £7.95, £9.50.

[2] Their memorandum is published in *The Civil Service, vol. 3 (1), Social Survey of the Civil Service*, (HMSO, 1969). The memorandum runs to some 400 pages.

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covery that the administrative class of the civil service was "much more middle and upper class in origin than the scientific officer class or the professional workers' group", that in fact no less than 67% of the administrative class and 79% of its direct entrants were born into the middle and upper classes! Nor was this all. For while university teachers reflected ("fairly precisely") "the social and educational composition of the undergraduate body from which they are drawn", the administrative class was – *horribile dictu*—"much more predominantly middle class." There was an even worse revelation. To the question—which they themselves posed—"whether Oxford and Cambridge graduates are in any pejorative sense 'over-represented' among those entering the administrative class", the investigators' solemn and devastating answer was, simply, "a simple affirmative."

What such simple affirmations assume is some kind of crude Marxian link between the origins of civil servants and their behaviour in office. The universal character and overriding significance of such a link these two investigators take to be axiomatic. Social origin, they flatly declare, "is the most useful summary index of the complex of social forces which impinge on the upbringing of an individual"; and they assert further that "the same process of social selection which brings individuals to diverse occupational destinations also fashions and maintains norms of outlook and shared assumptions among the members of a profession."

But such notions cannot possibly withstand scrutiny. It is not the place of the civil service to be "representative": representation is the affair of Parliament. The function of the civil service is rather to discharge the public business efficiently and impartially--and for this a certain aloofness, an eschewing precisely of representativeness, is necessary. The demand that the civil service should be educationally and socially "representative", however, follows from the notion that since it is drawn from the upper and middle class, *ipso facto* it will serve upper- and middle-class interests. But for this no evidence is adduced, nor can it be easily supplied. In fact, had the Fulton Committee remembered which university had nourished and fostered Philby, Burgess, and Maclean, and had it attended to another survey which it had also commissioned, it might have been a shade more careful in its sociological asseverations. In this other survey, *Profile of a Profession*,[3] Dr R. A. Chapman enquired of all the 1956 entrants to the administrative class—entrants, that is, who joined the service in its unreconstructed and unenlightened days—how they had voted in the 1966 general election. All of them answered, and their answers were as follows:

Labour	*17*
Conservative	*6*
Liberal	*4*
Scottish Nationalist	*1*
Did not vote	*2*

We may add that the 57% of the first-division civil servants who, ten years afterwards, voted to affiliate to the TUC serve to confirm the picture disclosed by Dr Chapman's questionnaire.

Even on their own assumptions, therefore, the Fulton Committee—and the young Crossman—are both misled and misleading. But this is not only because a large number (perhaps a majority?) of higher civil servants have sympathies which their social origins ought, on the Fulton doctrine, to rule out. The assumptions not only turn out to be wrong in fact, they are also irrelevant in principle. Whatever their private sympathies and inclinations, intelligent men will soon find out that public affairs and their efficient despatch are not easily bent to a political doctrine.

WHAT THE *Diaries* of the old Crossman establish—in confutation both of Fulton and of the young Crossman—is that the conduct of civil servants has little to do with their origin or party-political sympathies. The reality is that for at least four decades now—ever since the outbreak of the Second World War—the civil service has acquired habits which have ended by becoming ingrained. It has learnt the ambition to fine-tune the economy, to manage demand, control supply,[4] and bestow on each citizen no more and no less than his fair share of income (or, rather, of pocket money) and of "welfare"; to be, in one word, for the British people what their counterparts in the Indian civil service had been for the *ryot*: a very father and mother. It is this frame of mind—that of (shall we say?) a benevolent despotism—which, more than vulgar partisanship or social origin, makes civil servants so ready to undertake the "scientific planning" after which the young Crossman hankered, and to be so responsive to the interventionist and *dirigiste*

[3] *The Civil Service, vol. 3 (2), Surveys and Investigations*, (HMSO, 1968).

[4] *The Times* of 31 May 1977 carried an interview with Sir Bryan Hopkin, lately Chief Economic Adviser to the Treasury and Head of the Government Economic Service. He is reported as declaring: "Fine tuning for full employment which I believed in has contributed to the problem of inflation. It was the natural result of planning for full employment." What has bedevilled economic policy-making, he is also reported to have said, has been the ambivalent attitude of the British people towards growth. The Arabic proverb tells us that the monkey, not knowing how to dance, complains that the ground is not level.

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proclivities of British governments, whether Labour or Conservative.

THE FIRST VOLUME OF the *Diaries*, dealing with Crossman's period in the Ministry of Housing, will supply the evidence. The Ministry, by no means the invention of a Labour Government, may be seen as an exemplar and monument of official interventionism. When Crossman became Minister, the permanent head of the Ministry was Dame Evelyn Sharp with whom, as is well-known, his relations were not easy. What emerges from the *Diaries* is thus all the more significant, since beneath the tension and the disagreements, what we may discern is a remarkable congruence of instinct and outlook between minister and civil servant. Thus:

> She is rather like Beatrice Webb in her attitude to life, to the Left in wanting improvement and social justice quite passionately and yet a tremendous patrician and utterly contemptuous and arrogant, regarding local authorities as children which she has to examine and rebuke for their failures. She sees ordinary human beings as incapable of making a sensible decision.

Again:

> She sees the New Towns as the great creations of her Ministry and she loves them because they have been created autocratically from above.

And again (here his testimony is at its most instructive):

> I spent yesterday in Cumbernauld New Town . . . built on the top of a long, high, bleak ridge . . . an enormous lot of roads and a fascinating variety of modern houses. Up-and-down houses, vertical houses, horizontal houses, and everything including the churches, fitting into the style, everything done in a tremendously austere, exhilarating, uncomfortable style. I thought Atticus this morning in the *Sunday Times* was extremely apposite when he pointed out that this was the kind of thing which Dame Evelyn and I are excited about, in contrast to the cosy garden suburb atmosphere of Stevenage or Harlow or Basildon.

Our new Minister is now ensconced in his Ministry. He finds himself, he tells us, as though in a padded cell, guarded, shielded and comfortably supported by his civil servants. At times he is appreciative of their attentiveness and efficiency, at others he lashes out in suspicion of these very same qualities. Here then they are, in their Ministry, these *frères ennemis*. What do they do in the Ministry? They do housing. But this does not mean that they actually build houses which people want to rent or buy. No, they decide housing policy. Whether or not it is because they inhabit the same padded cell, we find Ministers and civil servants talking the same language—a language the relation of which to common-or-garden house-building is both remote and problematic.

> I have now [Crossman writes in November 1964] reached the conclusion that 400,000 houses will probably be built in the next twelve months . . . . Any decision I *now* take to make a new kind of plan which shifts the balance of housing between the public and the private sector beyond the next twelve months involves me in a very complicated calculation. I am pretty clear what the long term plan should be. I am pretty clear that the decision means comprehensive urban renewal. . . . A Labour Minister should impose central leadership, large-scale state intervention, in these blighted areas of cities, these twilight areas. . . .

This is clear-cut, decisive, purposive. The Minister is, however, aware that a financial crisis—or an interruption in the supply of bricks, or any other bottleneck in the building industry—might put his plans at naught. But if such are the imponderables relating to a period as short as a year, what is the value of the "complicated calculation" which he would have to undertake if he were to plan beyond these twelve months? However precise its terms, could such "calculation" be any more than a day-dream? And why 400,000 houses? No one in the bakery business would dream of planning the supply of bread without an idea of the likely effective demand. But in the padded cell of the Ministry of Housing those Siamese twins, supply and demand, severed from one another, become free-floating ghostly entities. Why 400,000? Why not 393,000 or 467,000? We may suspect that the only virtue of this figure is that it is a round figure. And as we read on, our suspicion seems to be confirmed:

> *26 May 1965*
> [Harold Wilson] has decided that all other social services must be cut back in order to have a magnificent housing drive and bring the annual production of houses up to 500,000 by 1970. "This is it", he said. "We'll make housing the most popular single thing this Government does. We won't build another single mile of road if a cut-back is necessary in order to get that half-million houses a year. That's what I believe in", he said.

But six weeks later, lo and behold, one of his officials was called to the Treasury and—

> . . . came rushing back into the room with a quite extraordinary story. He said that when he got there a fellow called Petch had announced to all those present that the Prime Minister wished to have worked out for him a plan for a complete three-month moratorium on all new contracts. Quite literally, for three months no one should, on behalf of any Ministry, sign a new contract. Petch had indicated that the occasion for this extraordinary idea was the fear that this month's balance-of-trade figures might again be very bad and set off another run on the pound by the Gnomes of Zurich: the Prime Minister wanted to do something which would impress them with our determination to curb incipient inflation.

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ARBITRARINESS, it is evident, is the principle which distinguishes this style of government. Of this arbitrariness—synonymous with planning—examples abound in the *Diaries*. Crossman and fellow-ministers try to decide where a New Town should be sited. George Brown is in favour of the Preston-Chorley area "because he wanted to see a new growth point in Lancashire." Douglas Jay is opposed to this. The area, he says, "can't be a growth point because growth must only take place in the development areas, and we must not grant industrial development certificates in the Chorley area because that will take them away from the areas of unemployment...." Since neither "growth" nor unemployment are easily amenable to the wishes even of ministers (since no one knows in advance what will stimulate the one and diminish the other), the argument between Jay and Brown was logomachic and a decision based on it no better than a throw of the dice.

Such arbitrary decisions are no doubt taken out of benevolence, out of a desire to *do good*. But it does not follow that they *will* do good or, in the end, satisfy the powerful benevolent urges of those who seek to take them. The young Crossman, as we know, was a great believer in "planning", which was to remedy injustice and improve the condition of the people. But to do good, as the old Crossman comes to realise, is not easy. He had, as Minister of Housing, the power in town-and-country planning:

> As a result of seeing on the spot the decisions I had taken, I was more aware than ever how impossible it is for me to judge them fairly when they come on appeal as bits of paper. But [as a civil servant pointed out to him] there is another problem . . . . There is no intrinsic fairness in planning, it is *by nature* unfair. In order to decide one individual case fairly the Minister must know not only the details of that case but the whole background . . . .

A minister with powers like these, then, has to be all-seeing and all-knowing. But would not the minister's omniscience lead him to a paralysing philosophical doubt, and might he not then—happy release—come to see that we live in the best of all possible worlds, with everything in it a necessary evil? But ministers are not omniscient and their "planning" is fortunately, as we know, a crude, hit-or-miss affair.

FORTUNATELY—but only in the long view. For "planning", like other enterprises, may come a cropper, and because of its scale and pretensions may involve large numbers in misfortune or unhappiness.

> Wigan is enormously overcrowded and since it is determined to be better than its jokes, the council has undertaken an enormous building programme; and, as a result, thousands of council houses have been built . . . . The houses are of an appalling dimness and dullness, and I am afraid they have built a Wigan that in 2000 will look just as bad as the old 1880 Wigan looks in the eyes of the 1960s.

Such a passage is one of these—and they are many—which serve to give the *Diaries* an eminent place in the literature of political confessions. And as a confession its interest is not at all diminished by the fact that Crossman—as he records—believed that "the appalling dimness and dullness" of council housing in Wigan was really occasioned by the absence in this town of a city architect or a town planner!

THE ARBITRARINESS, the high-handedness implicit in this style of government, comes out perhaps most clearly in the so-called prices and incomes policy. The Government takes to itself draconian powers—powers which mankind has hitherto attributed to God alone—to prescribe for each man how much exactly he may earn by the sweat of his brow, and for how much he may sell the product of his labour. And the Cabinet sitting in solemn conclave giving and taking away do seem to us to be very gods:

> We all soon agreed that the nurses should be given their full 9 per cent. I remembered how in 1962 Selwyn Lloyd gave the surtax payers their tax concession and cut the nurses' pay. Here we can prove that Roy [Jenkins] does the opposite. He gives the nurses their pay claim and the surtax payers a new tax on capital.

But the gods disappoint. They are, alas, hollow and powerless, as this entry attests:

> The main item was the Prices and Incomes White Paper. . . . Richard Marsh,[5] with whom I have a great deal of fellow-feeling, repeated that the whole thing is absolute nonsense . . . . The Chancellor himself doesn't believe in a prices and incomes policy. He believes that wages should find their own level. And yet as a Government we are in this situation and can't get out of it.

And this one:

> I know perfectly that the statutory prices and incomes policy is one of the few things which makes the difference between a socialist and a Tory Government . . . . And yet whenever I sit at this Committee I come to the conclusion that a statutory policy is unworkable. When I listen to the mumbo-jumbo of nil norms and the rest of it, and criteria, I feel they're infuriatingly bogus and I am inspired

[5] In a "profile" by Brian Connell, which appeared in *The Times* of 30 May 1977, Sir Richard Marsh is quoted as saying that "both parties in government, and I include myself when I was a minister, have totally ignored the law and encouraged civil servants to do the same thing. The statutes are broken or not observed regularly as a matter of course. Many of the pressures which ministers have applied in nationalised industry pricing or in the settlement of industrial relations have been in flagrant breach of the statutes...."

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by an Enoch Powellite desire to tear the whole thing to pieces. Yet in the end I have to vote for one of these legalistic formulae.

Or take, finally, the predicament of "poor Peter Shore" at yet another meeting of the Prices and Incomes Committee. "It's a fraud", Crossman complains, because whatever Shore proposes it is Scanlon and Jones who dispose:

Yet this poor Minister has to struggle along. Peter Shore boldly suggested that he would work for selective control permitting those price rises that ought to soar and only keeping down prices which needed to be kept down.

Grown men, Ministers, members of the Cabinet solemnly debating how to allow only price rises "that ought to soar" and to keep down those prices "which needed to be kept down"! What is impossible to bring about should not be attempted. It is these desperate attempts to bring about the impossible which account for the futility, the levity, the feeling of make-believe, of being powerless and hamstrung which permeates these *Diaries*. It sometimes results, no doubt unintentionally, in passages of a Marx Brothers quality. Here, for instance, is a conversation between the Prime Minister and the Lord President of the Council in September 1967—some two months before the Government was forced to devalue the currency. The conversation was on the subject of economic policy, which the Prime Minister was now to direct, having just taken over the Department of Economic Affairs. Prior to that, he was saying, he had had no real say in economic decisions even though people held him responsible.

I told him he was getting the wrong idea. "Even if your responsibility has only increased", I said, "from 80 per cent to 100 per cent, the risks have also increased if anything goes wrong." "Ah", he said, smiling, "but the chances of success have increased from 50 per cent to 130 per cent. If I can't run the economy well through D.E.A. I'm no good. I was trained for this job and I've now taken the powers to run the economy."

This sense of unreality—of Ministers who, despite their enormous powers and their control over the legislative factory, are hemmed in by crises which they cannot control or alleviate, being engaged in play-acting rather than in taking action—is not confined to the *Diaries* or to the Labour Government of the 1960s. It is conveyed just as powerfully in *The Cecil King Diary 1970–1974*[6] which covers Edward Heath's administration.

December 1st, 1971

Sir Frank Figgures rather astonished me by saying it was curious how nobody had any power today: power had seeped away and none was now left. This was why it took so long to get anything done as so many consents were necessary. This is the same statement that Sir George Bolton [a banker] made to me many months ago. "There is now in England no power centre." Even so it was surprising as coming from a man who, until very recently, was Second Secretary at the Treasury.

February 16th, 1972

We have had a mini-general strike [by the coal-miners] in which the Government has been defeated; intimidation by pickets at power-stations and at the House of Commons, has been permitted; no reference has been made to the Communist influence in the whole business; and the settlement is bound to be inflationary and to set the level for other inflationary claims. Carr's [the Secretary for Employment] conciliatory policy lies in ruins; Maudling's [the Home Secretary] feebleness is given further publicity, but no changes are forecast . . . the Rhodesian settlement seems to be a dead duck, and we are busy evacuating Malta.

April 23rd, 1972

Lunch with A.B. [a senior civil servant]. He says the miners' strike brought home to Ministers for the first time that a clash with the unions would mean a general strike—and the defeat of the Government. . . . What is the Government to do? A.B. thought it would take fifteen years to build up an adequate police force, and to rouse popular feeling against the Communist menace. The police force is below strength, and its establishment is too low; the territorials have been disbanded. The troops that can be spared are in Ireland.

May 11th, 1972

Lunch yesterday with Dick Briginshaw [a trade-union leader]. . . . He agreed that the £50 million given by the Government to the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders was a bad investment, but he said they had no alternative. The situation became very ugly and they were afraid of an uprising.

ARBITRARY GOVERNMENT, however far-reaching its consequences on those who are subject to it, is sometimes literally senseless. In a conference of ministers and civil servants which reviewed, in March 1968, three years of official activity in the social services, Mr Kenneth Robinson, Minister of Health, declared that he had made only two mistakes in his career: "One was to take the prescription charges off and the other was to put them on." Indeed, in this style of government, it becomes impossible to say what the consequences of any policy are, let alone whether or not they are beneficial.

We are not surprised to see that, for all the complication of committee upon committee and working party upon working party at his disposal, Crossman still complains that "there is no real instrument of central decision-taking" for the economy. Crossman himself is inclined to attribute his lack to "Harold's proclivity for opportunism" and "Whitehall's desire to prevent a coherent decision-taking body being imposed upon it." We may suspect that the reason does not lie in a particular Prime Minister's inclina-

[6] *Diary 1970–74*. By CECIL HARMSWORTH KING, Jonathan Cape, £5.95.

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tions, or in a supposed collective desire by the civil service to escape ministerial control. It lies, surely, rather in the over-government—the attempt precisely to establish a "central purposive direction" after which Crossman hankered—which demands a plethora of laws, regulations, and administrative devices. But, to quote Kenneth Robinson's example (which may stand for much else which is related in the *Diaries*), it is impossible to know whether it is better to impose or not to impose prescription charges. Such decisions, always meant to bring about definite and precise results, are, in reality and of necessity, something like the lucky—or the unlucky—dip.

CROSSMAN CONTRASTED the lack of an instrument of central decision-making in economic affairs with the existence of such an instrument in foreign policy and defence. It is, of course, in no way surprising that this should be so. Foreign policy and defence involve a narrow and specific range of issues which have always been *par excellence* the exclusive affair of the State—a range of issues amenable to fairly precise definition and coherent debate, where by comparison housing policy, say, or demand management are trapped in a quicksand of self-contradictions and treacherously unreliable guesses. What picture, then, emerges from the *Diaries* of the manner in which Crosssman and his colleagues discharged these primary and central political responsibilities?

In the first place it is a picture of Crossman himself confronting problems and responsibilities as a senior member of the Cabinet. Where he stood on these matters, what his tastes and inclinations were is not in doubt. He tells us that he found Nasser "imaginative and creative", and was "invigorated by his presence." At a Commonwealth Conference dinner he hit it off with Makarios, "a man of great charm", precisely because they shared this admiration for the then ruler of Egypt. He had (he also reveals) while a backbencher "egged on the Greeks to stir up their *Enosis* campaign" in Cyprus. He does not reveal why he behaved in this way; but one reason may have been that he was, as he calls himself, a Little Englander.

The future he envisaged for Britain was that of "an offshore island, cutting down all our overseas commitments, getting ourselves an economic position as favourable as that of Japan in the Far East and living on our own as an independent socialist community. . . ." He also believed that "all our economic troubles and our difficulties at home" stemmed entirely from British commitments overseas. He admired Clement Attlee's decision to withdraw from India "despite the fact that it cost a million lives." He does not refer to the other abrupt withdrawal effected by Attlee's administration, the abandonment and evacuation of Palestine, with its sequel of wars and refugees, but since he was (as he described himself) "a great getter-outer", in favour of "big withdrawals" which were "rapid" and "ruthless . . . abrupt . . . sudden", we may perhaps take it that he also approved of that other episode in the record of the third Labour administration.

He must, of course, have realised that it was not really possible suddenly and completely to get away from all overseas commitments. Thus, at a Cabinet committee on overseas policy and defence he (and like-minded colleagues) insisted that "as our military power declines the money we spend on information services and on psychological warfare must increase"—less action, so to speak, and more cackle. The *Diaries* record another bizarre consequence of abandoning military commitments. Because the defence budget has to be cut and a contract to buy expensive military aircraft from the US cancelled, Concorde, unprofitable and burdensome as it is, must be retained: "If we virtually abolish military aircraft we still have to believe in civil aircraft, particularly if we are concerned about jobs in the aircraft industry."

Such are Crossman's views and inclinations in respect of foreign affairs and defence. But they are by no means peculiar to him alone. Many fellow-ministers share them; and the Parliamentary Labour Party favours them, by instinct so to speak. "Our back-benchers", he notes in January 1967, "not only detest our support for the Americans in Vietnam—they also resent the weight of the defence burden." But both Crossman and the back-benchers are caught in an incoherence. To diminish "the defence burden", to get away from all overseas commitments *ipso facto*, must mean that Britain is incapable of defending her interests or asserting her views in a world made up of sovereign states which, recognising no superior, have all to depend for safety and prosperity on their own power and influence. Why, then, in the face of such an elementary fact and of his determination to whittle down the armed forces, does Crossman bitterly bemoan "this Government's impotence" and its subservience to American policies? Again, the coercion of Rhodesia was a popular policy among the back-benchers. But how, without overseas bases and a powerful army and navy, was Rhodesia to be coerced?

Rhodesia loomed very large in the foreign policy of the Labour administration of 1964–1970. It is puzzling to know exactly why this

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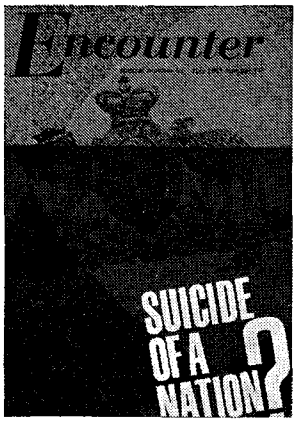
"Obsolete Attitudes"



LOOKING BACK *over the last fifteen years' dismal economic performance by this country, there are roughly three explanations in vogue.*

One (held, for example, by Sam Brittan) is that it is all the fault of the politicians with their adversary politics. The second (held by the bulk of economists, who all at one time or another helped or advised governments) is that at some crucial point their advice was not taken and so the ship of state was "blown off course." Either Wilson did not devalue soon enough, or Heath and Barber let the money supply rip, or Wilson and Foot allowed a wages inflation in 1974–5, and so on.

But now more and more of the commentators are turning to what is called "the structural argument." After all, our political system has worked well enough for a very long time, why should it ruin the economy now? There was plenty of political consensus in the "Butskellite" period, and what drove the parties into more extreme positions was the failure of the economy to deliver. As to being "blown off course", perhaps this could happen to one government but surely not to three successive governments. Doesn't this suggest something more fundamentally wrong than a meteorological accident?

Hence the structural argument: it takes a number of forms or has several facets but the total effect is to try and explain why Productivity per-man-hour is so much lower in Britain than in our main competitors. The answers are grouped round the idea that this country has always set a low store by business, by manufacturing and selling. Today, too few of our businessmen are graduates; engineering and technology have expanded less than other faculties; the quality of students is poorer, and fewer of them go into industry. This has been known for many years, but it is now carefully tabulated and set out in a Discussion Paper *recently published by the Department of Industry called* "Industry, Education and Management" (1977).

THE FIGURES ARE ALARMING. *The proportion of graduates getting jobs in Britain who entered manufacturing industry fell from 40% in 1970 to 26% in 1975. Moreover, the output of graduates is still rising—but not in engineering and technology. Many university places are vacant while the qualifications of engineering students (on leaving school) are considerably lower than those going in for other subjects.*

But, it may be said, the British have looked down on commerce—"mere money making"—over the years. My father was a "box-wallah" in India—he ran factories and sold various lines of British exports. On the P. and O. ships going out a list of passengers and occupations was published. The Indian Civil Service did not speak to the "box-wallahs" while the Army did not speak to the Civil Service. Within the army, the British commissioned officers regarded themselves as senior to the Indian army officers (all white), and the cavalry spoke only to themselves.

Yet for generations in the 19th century, and even later, there were sufficient boys of talent from poor families or non-conformist families who could not afford higher education or professional qualifications —with the result that they were available as a pool of brains and determination for industry. No matter that their main drive was to get their offspring to public schools and into these safe, respected occupations which they had not been able to enter.

NOW THE SAME VALUES *prevail, but academic life, research, administration at home have taken the place of the old Imperial occupations— and industry, manufacturing, producing and selling still lag far behind. Indeed, the position has got worse in some ways: for education is available for all and there is no longer the lower-middle-class and working-class reserve of talent to draw on. Also, among the younger intelligentsia, making money is perhaps an even more grubby idea than it was a hundred years ago. As John Rae, the Headmaster of Westminster, has pointed out* (ENCOUNTER, *"Our Obsolete Attitudes", November), is it likely that the trendy young teachers of today who oppose testing and competition in the classroom will encourage their pupils to go into the competitive and testing world of commerce?*

All this has been given added point for me by the record of one industry in my own constituency which has a higher productivity record than that of any European rivals; that is, agriculture. Why should this be? Unlike industry, it is socially acceptable and the brightest boys want to follow their fathers. The respect for technical knowledge is great and the vast bulk of farmers have received their diplomas or agricultural degrees. There is real, open competition because one can—and they do—look over the hedge and see how their neighbour is managing. The industry has its journals; it has its academic occasions (the Oxford Farming Conference) and its members take a pride in their expertise.

IF THIS WERE ALL TRUE *of British industry, this country would not be in its current economic plight. There are other aspects of the structural argument (notably our bad industrial relations), but the core of the argument centres on management; and it is good to see the Department of Industry putting its finger on the problem in such a clear-cut and helpful way. All we need now is some thoughtful and vigorous action to alter these long-established and quite obsolete attitudes.*

John P. Mackintosh

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should have been so. No great public interest, whether strategic or economic, hung on the principle of "one-man-one-vote" being enforced in Rhodesia. In Crossman's judgment, the reason had more to do with the Prime Minister's personal preoccupations:

> . . . in this Rhodesian affair [he writes in December 1966] his main concern is to prove himself right: to prove that he can win this as Kennedy won his Cuba. It's winning that matters here, whether by settlement or by defeating Smith. He can't make up his mind, but he's going to go on hammering, manoeuvering, intruding, evading to prove himself right.

RHODESIAN AFFAIRS are treated at very great length in Harold Wilson's *The Labour Government 1964–1970* (1971). By contrast, two other foreign policy issues with which his administration had to deal get very scant mention. These two issues were those of Aden (which became critical in 1967) and of the Persian Gulf (which came to the fore in 1968). These two issues, both at the time and in retrospect, could be seen to have great, not to say vital importance—an importance, for Britain, far transcending that of Rhodesia.

The colony of Aden was in a very disturbed state, prey to terrorism fomented, financed, and armed by the Egyptians who from 1962 onwards maintained sizable armed forces in the neighbouring Yemen. The disturbances were such that a state of emergency was declared in September 1965. But in February 1966 the Government announced as part of the "defence cuts" withdrawal from Aden in 1968. This, naturally, gave the Egyptians and the terrorists they supported every incentive to intensify disorders. This was to make sure that the British would really withdraw; to intimidate all those in Aden and in the adjoining Protectorates who might stand in their way; and to ensure that when the British withdrew, the territory would fall to them. These terrorists eventually split into two factions, FLOSY and FLN. The Egyptians supported FLOSY and opposed FLN. The Six-Day War led to Egyptian retreat from the Yemen, and the terrorists of the FLN gained the upper hand. It is to them that the British gave up territories which they had long ruled, and populations for whom they were, in honour, bound to secure law, order, and civilised government. Crossman's entries provide a commentary on the progress of the British abandonment of Aden Colony and the Protected Territories, a withdrawal as "big, rapid, ruthless, sudden and abrupt", as one could possibly wish for.

12 June 1967

I went straight on to an important meeting of O[verseas] P[olicy and] D[efence] about the package for Southern Arabia, and the kind of military support we will provide for the independent regime we leave behind. It's going to cost us £55 million in aid and we're going to have to keep Vulcan bombers somewhere in the Persian Gulf as a kind of ultimate deterrent. No wonder George Brown and Eddie Shackleton and our new man there, Humphrey Trevelyan, are all nervous lest the methods we choose for withdrawing may commit us to staying.

5 September 1967

We started O.P.D. with a discussion on Aden. George Brown says the Foreign Office now wants to negotiate with the extreme nationalists, the FLN, because FLOSY, the moderate party they'd previously backed, hardly exists now. At once George Wigg was up in arms. This meant betraying everyone in Aden who had promised to support us. George Brown says that there is no alternative and doesn't deny that the F.O. has swung in a few months from one extreme to the other. I reinforced George Wigg's argument that we shall certainly undermine the Federalists in Aden and this will be noticed by the sheikhs in Kuwait and elsewhere. But I agree with George Brown that it can't be helped. "Anyway," says George, "we want to be out of the whole Middle East as far and as fast as we possibly can." It's possible that the whole very expensive military commitment, including bombers and protective screening for the independent Aden Government, may now go by the board because that Government won't be there. George Wigg thinks it a disaster. I think it first rate and most of the Committee share my view.

27 October 1967

At O.P.D. George Brown started a discussion on Aden by apologising for having to tell us that we will be out in November instead of January. The rest of the Committee couldn't be more pleased. Really we've been miraculously lucky in Aden—cancelling all our obligations and getting out without a British soldier being killed. But George feels desperate because it's different from what he promised. We spent an hour trying to encourage him.

30 October 1967

The special Cabinet to authorise George Brown's decision to withdraw from Aden a month earlier than planned went according to form. Once again he spent his time apologising for what all his colleagues considered a wonderfully lucky and fortunate result. That the régime he backed should have been overthrown by terrorists and has forced our speedy withdrawal is nothing but good fortune. It now looks as though we shall get out of Aden without losing a British soldier, chaos will rule soon after we've gone, and there'll be one major commitment cut—thank God.

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, the subject of decadence was very popular among writers. Salisbury, Balfour, Max Nordau (among many others) tried in their various ways to discover what constituted its essential characteristics. Had they been fortunate enough to be acquainted with these entries they would, without doubt, have fastened on them as most precious examples of the phenomenon which fascinated them. We cannot, of course say how they would have explained or accounted for the spectacle of a British Cabinet (representing, so it is be-

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lieved, a vigorous and ascending class) rubbing their hands with relief over surrender to what they knew to be a gang of terrorists. How did it ever come to this pass, they might have wondered, that a prominent member of the Cabinet—who was successively Scholar of Winchester, and Scholar and Fellow of New College, its sister foundation in Oxford, author of such treatises as *Socrates, Plato Today, Government and the Governed*—should be thanking his God for the fortunate prospect of chaos and terrorism in lands over which, even as he was writing, the Union Jack still flew? The question will not be answered; but it is expeditiously disposed of by the few lines allotted to the episode in the Prime Minister's own retrospective.

> Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, the Governor of Aden, flew back to London to urge on the Foreign Secretary and myself a speeding up of the date of our withdrawal. It was successfully accomplished on 30th November, in good order and with no loss of life: a superb [no other epithet would do] operation in which Sir Humphrey Trevelyan and the C.-in-C., Sir Michael le Fanu, deserved high tribute, as did the Foreign Secretary, who handled it coolly and with great skill and imagination throughout. The new People's Republic of South Yemen came into being on that date.

But in Aden more than mere honour was involved.

FOR BRITAIN, open and secure sea lanes are a vital necessity, equally vital is a secure supply at a moderate price of oil from the Middle East where British oil companies had extensive and valuable investments. Such interests were far bigger than those involved in Rhodesia which looms so large in Harold Wilson's memoirs. The abandonment of Aden where the Soviets inherited the British position increased the potential threat to the sea lanes in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, weakened the British ability to ensure the supply of oil at an acceptable price, and put at risk British investment in the oil industry in the Persian Gulf. When the Cabinet took the decision to evacuate Aden, a junior Minister was despatched to Persia and the Persian Gulf to give firm assurances that Britain had no intention of withdrawing from the Gulf. Some three months later the same messenger was sent again to inform the recipients of his recent assurances that Britain was, after all withdrawing, and pretty quickly, from the Gulf. This was the outcome of a decision on spending cuts taken by the Cabinet at the beginning of January 1968 in which a large majority headed by the Prime Minister voted that withdrawal from the Gulf should take place by 1970–71. This decision (which the Conservative administration of Edward Heath confirmed) made Britain quite powerless to resist the arbitrary and extortionate increase in the price of oil which OPEC was shortly afterwards to impose, or to protect British assets—which were quite substantial—against nationalisation pretty much on terms dictated by the governments concerned.

We learn from the *Diaries* that in October 1967 the Government was given a paper composed by some officials which prophesied that when all Middle Eastern oil was nationalised the price would go up by 75%. It is impossible to know why this figure was hit upon. If the production of oil was to be fully controlled by the producer states, and if these states were banded together in a cartel, then (as was shortly to be established) they could impose any price which they chose to charge for their commodity. The figure of 75% was an arbitrary fancy, something plucked out of the air, and like similar meaningless figures of Houses to be built and Growth to be attained, the concomitant of an arbitrary style of government.

The decisions on Aden and the Gulf were two of the most important, if not the two most important, foreign policy decisions taken by Harold Wilson's administration, and their consequences, which are probably yet to be fully worked out, could be nothing but deleterious to British interests. It is undoubtedly true that disagreeable (and perhaps even potentially disastrous) decisions have sometimes to be taken, because there is absolutely no alternative—because any conceivable alternative is manifestly worse. This was not the case here. As the *Diaries* indicate, the decision was the outcome of a *doctrinaire* conviction that overseas commitments are always both wrong and unprofitable, that money spent on defence is bread taken from the workers' mouths, and of a process of crude bargaining between Ministers in which the probable consequences (of staying in or leaving Aden and the Gulf) were the last thing to be considered. Two of Crossman's entries (for 27 December 1967 and 4 January 1968) giving details of this bargaining are explicit enough. In the entry for 27 December Crossman describes how he had been brooding over the cuts in public expenditure which the sterling crisis was making necessary, and how

> Harold [Wilson] and Roy [Jenkins] are now firmly committed to the view that we have to slaughter some sacred cows in order to appease the bankers. . . . When I challenged Roy about this the other night he said that £40 million saved in prescription charges is worth £140 million anywhere else because of the impression it makes on the bankers. Well, I've been thinking a lot about this slaughter of the sacred cows and I've come to the conclusion that if we are going to hold the Party together it is essential that we must have some major cuts in defence, *i.e.* some slaughter of right-wing sacred

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> cows. When I gave Roy dinner at Lockets before Christmas the idea of balance which I sold him was withdrawal from East of Suez and cancellation of the purchase of F-111 in exchange for two domestic cows.

Horse-trading between the Lord President of the Council and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (not in a smoke-filled back room but in a posh restaurant) would no doubt be justified as being in the public interest and as conducing to the survival of the Government. The two are, of course, not identical; but men in power no doubt find it difficult not to confuse the two. But the confusion is particularly incongruous in someone like Crossman whose *Diaries* are redolent with the confident rhetoric of self-assured philanthropy and tough benevolence.

Ministers' decisions, as they are described to us, may be arbitrary, but their intentions are of the highest. As we persevere with the *Diaries*, however, this shining and beautiful picture, like the picture of Dorian Gray, suffers gradual but drastic change. Ministers using power in the service of principle come insensibly to resemble the skilled operators of 18th-century politics—come to seem as so many Walpoles, so many Henry Foxes dispensing Treasury favours. Of the Prime Minister Crossman observes in December 1966 that "His main aim is to stay in office. That's the real thing and for that purpose he will use almost any trick or gimmick if he can only do it." He also succinctly formulates the conventional wisdom—and it comes straight from the horse's mouth—that a party in power can win an election from Whitehall. And its weapons in such a contest are incomparably more powerful and far-reaching than what the Whig oligarchs had at their disposal—they are, in fact, the very same devices, demand management, fine tuning, *etc.*, which a beneficent Providence has ordained for perpetual happiness and prosperity.

But, for all that, modern Governments do not disdain the traditional, grosser, and less scientific contrivances. Thus, we observe Crossman as Minister of Housing resorting to what is vulgarly known as the gerrymander in order delicately and simultaneously to provide for the welfare both of the public and the Party:

> *16 January 1965*
>
> One of the things I had been thinking about in the last fortnight is how to get the Boundary Commission's directive reshaped and refurbished, not merely politically where all I have to do is prevent thirty or forty Labour seats going to the Tories, but also in terms of the efficiency of local government.
>
> *24 August 1966*
>
> Come what may, no decision would be taken about a local government boundary without the parliamentary repercussions being fully considered and without my trying to shield the Labour position. I started by protecting Bert Bowden's position in Leicester, and then I dealt with Nottingham and Middlesbrough in the same way. All the way through I think I managed to combine a sound local government policy with an extremely shrewd defence of Labour's parliamentary interests.

Look, again, at these scenes from the bazaar of politics. In August 1965 the Minister of Power asks that the price of coal should be increased.

> George Brown's reply was that at the present juncture an increase would be tantamount to political suicide. He reminded us that coal prices had not been increased for four years under the Tories. How could we risk the T.U.C. blowing up in our faces at their Congress in September? Callaghan turned round and said, "Some time we have to face reality. That time has come now. We ought to put the prices up and keep the wages steady." George Brown replied, "That will be the end of the incomes policy." Callaghan: "There comes a point when you have to do it." Brown: "You've no right to talk like that to me here."

See now the Prime Minister bargaining with the farmers about the size of their subvention by the State.

> [The Prime Minister] then launched into the inside story of the agreed agricultural price review. . . . Apparently Harold had sent for Woolley, the President of the N[ational] F[armers'] U[nion], and told him there was a chance of settlement. If he would come down from his £27 million, we would move up from our original £20 million. With this authority Peart and Woolley clinched it at £23 million.

Mercifully, this is not the politics of "*who whom*"; rather the politics of "how much", of fixers who in their coarse way reckon they know the price of everyone and have an eye for a good quick bargain, of *ins* and *outs*, of Tapers and Tadpoles.

Let us look in at a Cabinet meeting in between the elections of 1964 and 1966:

> *11 February 1965*
>
> Each Minister has been told that he is only allowed the increased estimate allocated to his Department by the Tory White Paper last year. This means that over the next four, if we keep the priorities unchanged, Transport would get an increase of 30 per cent, Education 30 per cent and Housing only 10 per cent. The reason is simple. In order to win votes in that last period before the election the Tories were prepared to announce a rapid expansion of higher education, a huge hospital-building programme, a huge road-building programme. The one social service they felt it was popular to cut back was public-sector housing. . . .
>
> It was my contention that whereas the other Ministers could fairly be asked to be content with the amount of money in the Tory estimates, this was quite unreasonable in the case of housing where we were pledged to reverse the Tory policy and expand council-house building.

THUS, THROUGH THE OPEN-HANDED distribution of housing and other sweeteners a pleasing harmony is established between principle and

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practice, between the welfare of the people and that of the Government. Godlike, the Minister declares his pleasure. He gives his bounty to some and denies it to others. All-knowing, clement, merciful, when night comes he sleeps the sleep of the just.

Before his translation, when he was a journalist, his articles used to pursue Crossman in his sleep and he used to "wake up early in the morning in a panic about whether I had done something wrong." Now these fears and trepidations are gone: "Indeed I sleep all the more soundly for having had those decisions to take during the day, for having written 'O.K.' on that policy document, for having been a man of action in that sense of the word." When he sits in his house of Prescote near Banbury and pulls out "a mass of papers from the red box and see that I have to decide on the boundaries of Coventry or on where to let Birmingham have its new housing land, I find these decisions easy, pleasant, and I take them in a fairly light-hearted way." In short, "Life for me personally is going magnificently."

And what enhances this marvellous well-being is Prescote Manor and its 500 acres where life "gets lovelier the longer it goes on." Here he enjoys his creature comforts, his food, his drink, his fitted carpets, "the sense of spaciousness on the farm, the sense of belonging to the village without any great obligation. These are the things I intensely and enormously enjoy." "Here", the son of a High Court judge declares, playing at the workman who has risen in the world, "one acquires bourgeois values." Free from worries about money, and with a constantly accumulating capital, anxious to preserve Prescote for his posterity, he becomes

> very doubtful whether the fiscal changes introduced by Jim Callaghan with the assistance of Nicky Kaldor have not been clumsy, academic interventions in the economy. I'm becoming more and more uneasy about the fact that people like Harold are so confident they can intervene in the economy by means of investment allowances and be sure that this will stimulate private investment. The evidence at Prescote gives us support for this view. I'm still very doubtful about the new Industrial Expansion Bill which Wedgy is working out with Harold because I feel that such a Bill will enable him to take decisions which neither he nor his civil servants are really capable of taking. As someone who helps to run a small farming business, I can see rather more clearly the dangers of the kind of intervention by amateurs advised by civil servants which Harold believes in so much.

But all this does not go without some scruples. Are Prescote and his belief in Left-wing socialism compatible?

Crossman is challenged on this by his brother, a "fierce old Tory", and his answer is that the two are compatible provided he is ready to vote for high taxation and even for a policy of confiscation. Crossman also has another excuse. His socialism, he declares, has never been based "on a moral or egalitarian philosophy", it is all an expression of his "bump of irreverence", of his conviction that "governments and establishments are fools." He hopes that perhaps this irreverence (which, as we have seen, has taken him far) will not necessarily be "blunted by the marvellous kind of life we're able to live here at Prescote."

WHETHER HE HIMSELF or readers of his *Diaries* can believe this is impossible to say. But the fact is that this Socialist in office gradually begins to feel as remote from the Common Man as any of those Whig grandees whose outlook and style (so different from Crossman's) Lord David Cecil has memorably evoked in the opening pages of *The Young Melbourne*. The "amplitude of life" which Crossman enjoys at Prescote cuts him off, he feels, from the vast mass of people and particularly from the people of his constituency in Coventry: "I feel it and they feel it too." But just as running a farm led Crossman to doubt the efficacy and the good sense of the policies which his colleagues favoured, so after some years in office he began to feel that the certainties which had sustained him in his political life were a broken reed. His experience as a Minister, he writes in December 1967, "has really shaken that ultimate faith in the political educability of man or, more deeply even, in the possibility of a government whose decisions are taken by ordinary people."

And so at the end of the second volume of his *Diaries*, we take leave of the Minister, now nearing the end of his political life. His mood is one of mellow and lofty disillusion, and he surveys as from a great height the multitude over whose petty concerns Providence has charged him with the duty of keeping watch.

> I can't help wondering [he writes in April 1968] if the whole of my life has been lived in vain and if that is not the reason why I'm so glad to have given up adult education and journalism and taken on a spell as a professional politician—a member of the ruling establishment. How ironically suitable our position here at Prescote is to this task. Here are Anne and I, people of affluence, running a big farm and therefore just suitable for being members of the establishment. Is it hypocrisy to say this? No, because I've abandoned the aims in which I believed in the W[orkers'] E[ducational] A[ssociation] and I now accept that the settled and just management of society by a progressive oligarchy is the best we can hope for.

Whatever Crossman's doubts about the political educability of the common man, it remains an open question whether this passage testifies to the success of his own long and expensive political education.

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Martin Esslin

Icon & Self-Portrait

Images of Brecht

ON 10 February 1978 Bertolt Brecht would have reached the age of eighty. On 14 August 1977 twenty-one years had passed since he died in East Berlin.

Much, far too much, has been written about Brecht since then. He has become a cult figure, a badge, a symbol for a multitude of different causes, aesthetic as well as political. The adjective "Brechtian" is bandied about by people who have not the slightest idea of what it is supposed to mean. The exegesis and "interpretation" of his aesthetic theories has become an academic growth-industry, while in the East German *DDR* Brecht, who had been under constant attack by the party as a "formalist" while he was alive and repeatedly had his productions banned, now runs athletics a close second as that dubious nation's main prestige exhibit in its struggle for recognition as a country with its own legitimate identity.

Bogus and based on ignorance and distortion the myth of Brecht may be, but it is, for that very reason, not less but *more* important. For myths and mystifications of this kind have their impact on the real world. Like the corpse in Ionesco's play they grow ever larger, and with increasingly nihilist results. The image of Brecht—like that of Antonin Artaud—has been used to create much of the highly inflammatory (and intellectually empty) emotional climate of the New Left of 1968 which has contributed to such cancerous excrescences as Baader-Meinhof terrorism. It has, in a different context, given rise to an enormous volume of useless, time-wasting and intellectually destructive scholasticism both in Germany and in the English-speaking world; much of this kind of pseudo-aesthetic speculation about Brecht's theoretical writings is pursued by "scholars" who cannot read German and are therefore compelled to base their musings on the relatively small proportion of texts available in translation.

Yet surely Brecht deserves better than that. He is, after all, one of the great poets of our time as well as a personality whose well-documented life and thought epitomise a great many of the central issues of the contemporary world: the dilemmas of the intellectual between the ideologies of Right and Left, Fascism and anti-Fascism, Liberalism and McCarthyism, the Avant-garde and "Socialist Realism", and all the stresses of exile and return to a destroyed homeland. Even the posthumous fate of Brecht has enormously significant implications. For the fact that he died in the *DDR* and left most of his papers there makes him a test case in the highly contentious question whether the complete and objective publication and study of a major literary and political figure is at all possible in a totalitarian society.

IN THIS MATTER the signs are far from encouraging. Although in the twenty-one years since Brecht's death a Collected Edition of his works has been prepared under the auspices of the East German guardians of his archives, it does not include items which are known to exist (notably a series of erotic poems, which clearly would not meet the standards of Victorian prudery prevalent behind the Berlin Wall, as well as sundry writings critical of Stalin). The first volume of a vast complete Bibliography of Brecht's publications[1] which has recently appeared presents the appear-

[1] Gerhard Seidel, *Bibliographie Bertolt Brecht*, Titelverzeichnis. Band 1 (Berlin and Weimar, Aufbau Verlag, 1975).

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ance of a work of formidable scholarship; but on closer inspection, it is also guilty of suppressing at least one of Brecht's works, the cantata *Herrnburger Bericht* which he wrote (to music by Paul Dessau) for the World Youth Festival of 1951.

One must concede that this work *was* a major blunder; but for that very reason it is significant. For it shows Brecht's innocence and naivety in the face of the East German régime and his blissful unawareness of its real nature. *Herrnburger Bericht* is a series of songs dramatising an episode which happened in 1950 when a number of West German Communist youths who wanted to attend an East German youth meeting had been subjected to some harassment by West German frontier-guards. Brecht made this very minor incident the occasion for a bitter indictment of the West German authorities who had resorted to "violent means" to block free intercourse between the two parts of a divided Germany. One can imagine the dismay with which a Stalinist government, desperately concerned with sealing off its frontiers and preventing its population from having free access to the West—Ulbricht's *SED* state which eventually was planning to build a Wall along the entire 116-mile length of its frontier—must have received this plea for the complete abolition of all frontier controls! No wonder the piece which had already been rehearsed and performed at one of East Berlin's theatres was withdrawn, and every effort was made to consign it to complete oblivion—although the full text had been printed in the *SED* Party newspaper *Neues Deutschland* and distributed in pamphlet form. And even now, more than twenty-five years later, its existence cannot be mentioned in what purports to be a scholarly publication!

YET, IF THE CENSORSHIP exercised in a totalitarian police state is disturbing, how much more disturbing is the self-censorship imposed upon themselves by the practitioners of the current West German New-Left conformism in a society free of such drastic restrictiveness.

The way in which Klaus Voelker, the author of the first full biography of Brecht, written and researched in West and East Germany,[2] deals with this episode of the *Herrnburger Bericht* is highly symptomatic of this phenomenon. He devotes some two pages to the cantata, and he mentions the fact that it was withdrawn on the orders of the East German authorities. But he leaves the reasons for this as vague as possible, and he even implies that it was mainly because Brecht had ridiculed some West German politicians too crudely that Messrs Pieck and Grotewohl did not want the work to be performed and that it was its form rather than its content that had offended them. This kind of crude equivocation in the cause of whitewashing the East German authorities is characteristic of Voelker's whole approach.

It is even more blatant in his treatment of the episode of the withdrawal of Brecht's and Dessau's opera *The Trial of Lucullus*. Here Voelker manages to indicate the ban on the first version of the work merely between the lines and by implication. Having never mentioned that the first version was banned, he simply states that "in the revised version [the opera] could be performed in the autumn of 1951 in the *Staatsoper*." In this way he conceals the actual performance and withdrawal of the piece in the spring of the same year (for, after all, a revised version could have been made of an unperformed work as well) while re-insuring himself against the reproach that he had distorted the facts. In other words: those who know the facts will recognise what actually happened, while those who do not know them can be deceived.

And what can one make of similar tactics with regard to the treatment of Stalin and Stalinism in Voelker's book? He cannot, in West Germany, completely conceal the facts; but he does his best to play them down, even at the cost of distorting Brecht's reaction to them. Brecht's Soviet friend, the writer Sergey Tretyakov, for example, was (according to Voelker) "arrested, and perished in a labour camp" (p.225). There is no word about the fact that Brecht heard that Tretyakov had been *shot* and that he devoted one of his most moving poems to the question whether Tretyakov could have been guilty of the crimes he had been accused of.

Mein Lehrer
Der grosse, freundliche
Ist erschosses worden, verurteilt duch ein Volksgericht.
Als ein Spion. Sein Name ist verdammt,
Seine Buecher sind vernichtet. Das Gespraech ueber ihn
Ist verdaechtig und verstummt.
Gesetzt er ist unschuldig?

My teacher,
My great, friendly teacher,
Has been shot, condemned by a People's Court.
As a spy. His name is execrated.
His books are destroyed. Talk about him
Becomes suspicious and is silenced.
But what if he is innocent?

Surely Brecht's reaction to the death of a man who exercised a decisive influence on his development towards Marxism would have been relevant to his biography? But, then, to mention that

[2] Klaus Voelker, *Bertolt Brecht: eine Biographie* (Munich, Hanser, 1976).

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people were actually shot in Soviet Russia under Stalin would to present-day German New-Left conformism appear as shocking as it would have been to a Victorian spinster to use four-letter words at tea in an English vicarage garden. On the other hand, Voelker's book is (for the first time) quite open about Brecht's notorious sexual exploits—which amounted to full-scale polygamy. This was a subject which could not previously be mentioned, because, while she was still alive, Brecht's widow, Helene Weigel, would have wreaked fearful revenge against anyone who mentioned the matter.

But Voelker's New-Left puritanism where the realities of life under Communism are concerned is by no means the greatest weakness of his biography (which had long been eagerly awaited, since he had access to much material which had hitherto been unavailable). The book is without cohesion, lacks an integrating concept, and does not even attempt to see its subject whole. For this the author clearly lacks both the intellectual equipment—a thorough knowledge of European history, Marxism and its philosophical context and psychological insight, as well as the courage to tackle the problems faced by Brecht in all their bewildering paradox and complexity, problems to which Brecht responded with his own strange blend of double-bottomed irony. When, for example, Brecht is reported to have replied to Sidney Hook who drew his attention to the mass arrests of old Communists in the Soviet Union:

> *"The more innocent they are, the more they deserve to die",*

Voelker crudely asserts that he did so in order to shock and because "stupidity and intellectual limitations made him passionately unjust." Why, one asks, should Professor Hook's or anyone else's questions about Stalin's terror be a sign of stupidity? Here again Voelker gives away his crude conformism to which every questioning of Soviet policy is a manifestation of idiocy. Yet, he also misses the real implications of Brecht's remarks to which attention has more than once been drawn. For if *innocence* of plotting against Stalin is a reason for condemnation to death, the implication clearly is that *resistance to Stalin* must be regarded as a moral duty of the highest order! Brecht's remark could thus appear to have been at least a highly ambiguous and ironical one.

One of the most curious and revealing aspects of Voelker's deeply disappointing book is its epigraph, a quotation from a letter Sigmund Freud wrote to Arnold Zweig in 1936:

> "Anyone who becomes a biographer takes upon himself an obligation to lie, to conceal, to be hypocritical, to make things look better than they are, and even to hide his own lack of understanding; for truth in biography is not to be had; and if one had it, one could not use it."

Clearly, Voelker was conscious of what he was trying to do by writing his biography of Brecht without letting his side down. It is, however, characteristic of Voelker that here, too, he got it all wrong by overlooking the context of his quotation. For Freud was replying to a letter in which Arnold Zweig had offered to write his, Freud's, biography; and Freud did not want Zweig to write it, because he felt that Zweig was not qualified to undertake such a task, nor that his biography should be written while he was still alive. So in fact Freud's generalisations about the impossibility of writing biographies were a polite way of rejecting one particular biographer.

IN STRIKING CONTRAST to the simplicities and simplifications of this biography Brecht's own fragmentary journals which have become available in the last few years[3] contribute far more to an understanding of his complex personality and his ideas. They comprise portions of a detailed day-to-day journal of his personal life in his early twenties, occasional more personal jottings from later years and, at greater length, his "working diaries" from 1938 to 1955, a more impersonal record of thoughts and ideas in the latter period of his exile and during his years in East Berlin. While the early diaries are effusive, lyrical and self-consciously dithyrambic, the *Arbeitsjournal* has obviously been written with caution and an eye on posterity.

> "In the last few days I have superficially leafed through this entire journal. Naturally it is pretty distorted, because of possible unwanted readers. And it will be difficult for me to make use of these hints. Certain limits are here maintained, precisely because there are limits which must be transcended" (21 January 1942).

Some twenty years earlier Brecht had been rather more candid in revealing his basic attitude to life, an attitude in the light of which many of his subsequent actions become very much clearer:

> "A little feeling is growing inside me against dualities: (strong/weak; great/small; happy/unhappy; ideal/not ideal). This, in the last resort, is due to the fact that people cannot think of more than two things at once. More does not fit into their sparrows' brains. But the soundest attitude is simply: to trim [*lavieren*, which might also be rendered by to tack, to shift one's position according to circumstances, to twist and turn; *cf.* the title of Brecht's highly personal book of pastiche

[3] Bertolt Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal 1938–1955* (2 vols.), Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1973. Bertolt Brecht, *Tagebuecher 1920–1922. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen 1920–1954* (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1975).

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Chinese fables: Me-ti, *Buch der Wendungen*—Book of Twists and Turns]" (3 September 1920).

Much of the early diaries is taken up with a detailed and highly coloured account of Brecht's stormy entanglements with a number of girls (their pregnancies, abortions and illegitimate offspring); attempts to induce his father to take in his illegitimate son which were rejected; and a succession of highly dramatic scenes with the elderly black-marketeer who was the protector of the opera singer Marianne Zoff, Brecht's mistress who, however, could not dispense with the older man's money (she was eventually briefly married to Brecht, when having miscarried one of his children she became pregnant again and presented him with a daughter). The journal also throws a good deal of light on the psychological background to Brecht's Don Juan complex which led him into that wild series of simultaneous polygamous affairs with women about which Klaus Voelker does have a good deal to tell. For it shows the curiously erotic atmosphere of Brecht's relationship with the band of male school friends which dominated his adolescence and which, although it might never have become overt, clearly bears the mark of latent homosexuality.

"Es ist besser mit einem Freund als mit einem Mädchen. Wir liegen im Wasser (20°R) und im Wald und dann im Boot, und da schwimmen wir noch einmal, wie es schon Nacht ist. Liegt man auf dem Rücken, dann gehen die Sterne mit, oben, und die Flut läuft durch einem durch. Nachts fällt man ins Bett wie eine reife Frucht: mit Wollust."

"It is better with a friend than with a girl. We lie in the water and in the forest and then in the boat and then we swim once more when it is night. If one lies on one's back, the stars follow one above and the flood flows through one's body. At night one falls into bed like a ripe fruit: voluptuously" (16 July 1920).

It is also significant that Paula Banholzer, the mother of Brecht's first illegitimate son Frank, when she became part of this band of brothers was given a male nickname (Paul Bittersweet, abbreviated to Bi). The prevalence of homosexual themes in Brecht's early plays (*Baal, Edward II, In the Jungle of Cities*) reflects the intensity of this experience. That such preoccupations were present in Brecht's mind has long been evident from any close reading of these (and many subsequent) plays. The diary now gives full and convincing confirmation of such assumptions.

Equally revealing, and valuable for an understanding of Brecht's attempts to create a Marxist aesthetics of theatre is the evidence which these early diaries supply, that in fact much of that theory which he laboriously rationalised in Marxist terminology pre-dates his discovery of Marx and was already present in his earliest views on art, simply because his natural instincts inclined him that way. As early as June 1920 Brecht notes:

"I am looking around for new forms and am experimenting with my emotions like the most up-to-date artists. But then again and again I am struck by the thought that simplicity, greatness and emotion are the essence of art, and *the essence of its form is coolness*" (27 June 1920, italics added).

Here we are at the source of the *Verfremdungseffekt* (*"distanciation"*, alienation) long before that Marxist-sounding term was invented.

"Few sayings about art have gripped me as much as Meier-Graefe's sentence about Delacroix: 'In his case a fiery heart beat inside a cold man.'

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> "One great fault of other art I think I have managed to avoid in *Baal* and *Dickicht* [the early version of *Jungle of the Cities*]: its striving to grip and involve. Instinctively I leave distances here and make sure that my effects (poetical and philosophical) remain confined to the stage. The splendid isolation of the spectator is not touched, it is not *sua res, quae agitur*, he is not appeased by being invited to feel with the characters, to reincarnate himself in the hero, and, by looking at himself at the same time, to appear in two editions, unassailable and significant. There is a higher kind of interest: the interest in the metaphor, the other, the unsurveyable, the things which make you wonder." (10 February 1922—Brecht's twenty-fourth birthday).

Here, without the aid of Marxism is the whole of epic theatre, almost fully formed, as Brecht himself clearly states, out of his own *instinct*. Far from being, as he later never tired of arguing, the fruit of the application of Marx's scientific principles to aesthetics, the Brechtian theory can thus now be quite clearly seen as an ingenious rationalisation of his own artistic instincts.

WHAT PART, THEN, DID Marxism have to play in Brecht's subsequent development? In a later jotting, dating from July 1926, Brecht put very clearly what it was he was searching for:

> "If I decided to try my hand at real literature, I should have to turn 'playing about' into work, and to declare my excesses to have been a vice. I should have to establish a plan and to execute it in order to get tradition into my work, inspiration through physical habit and the joy of working things out. I would have to make an effort to select a style which would enable me to find the easiest formula for what I had to develop. My appetites would have to be regulated so that the wild impulses are eradicated and my interest could be evolved over the long run, so perhaps, that I should still be capable of writing plays very rapidly, but not be compelled to do so. . ." (end of July 1926, p.207-8).

Marxism—which Brecht discovered shortly after he had made this note—provided just that. It provided the discipline, the tradition, the restraint for his wild, inspirational outbursts which he was seeking. And this in spite of the fact that (as he said in a note jotted down in the following year, 1927):

> "I am not sitting comfortably on my backside: it is too bony. And the worst is: my contempt for the unfortunate is too strong. I distrust those who are distrustful, I have something against those who do not succeed in sleeping well. . . ."

Brecht's conversion to Marxism was wholehearted, not least because it provided the hard framework for his excessive and impulsive nature, and enabled him to appear a cold man in spite of a hot heart. The view of the legend of his official hagiography—which he himself was not beyond fostering in his later years—that he had always been a man of the extreme Left, however, can hardly be maintained. Here is a diary entry (it dates from September 1920) which describes his reaction to someone who had been extolling the Soviet system:

> "I am horrified not so much by the disorder which actually reigns there as by the order which is in fact being aimed at. I am now very much against Bolshevism: conscription, food rationing, controls, corruption, favouritism. And besides, in the most favourable outcome: balance, gradual change, compromise" (12 September 1920).

Here we have the sources of a tremendous, creative inner tension. On the one hand, there is his distrust of an excessively ordered society, the Nietzschean individualism we find in a character like Baal (who has much of Brecht's early personality), the rejection of any too rigidly disciplined way of thinking:

> "I don't believe I'll ever have such a full-grown philosophy as Goethe or Hebbel had; they must have had the memory of tram conductors, as far as ideas are concerned. I forget my views again and again and cannot bring myself to learn them by heart" (24 August 1920).

On the other hand, there is his yearning for discipline, a fixed framework, a tradition with its own classics—Brecht rejected the German classics, Goethe, Schiller and Hebbel but later constantly referred to Marx and Engels as "the classics"—a band of brothers as closely knit and as emotionally charged as that band of brothers of his youth. ("When George and Buschiri and their friends are drunk, they embrace, nonchalantly, romantically, silently, under the table. . .", August 1920.)

No wonder that the dominant theme of the period of Brecht's conversion to the Marxist "tradition", the period of his *Lehrstuecke* (didactic plays) is that of the reconciliation between the need for discipline—the merging of one's personality into the collective to the point of total self-abandonment—and a passion for freedom. The Young Comrade of *Die Massnahme*, the greatest of the didactic plays, is a man whose heart is too impulsive to conform to the hard requirements of Party discipline which amount to a total erasure of one's individuality. But when he gives his consent to being killed by the Party for his breaches of discipline, he does so out of an abundance of emotion which amounts to no less than an orgasm of masochistic love for his comrades; in fact, a nonchalant, romantic and silent embrace, although this time not drunkenly under the table, but into the grave with a bullet in the nape of the neck.

BRECHT'S CONVERSION to Marxism consolidated itself around 1930. In the following twenty-six years of his life, through exile and his life in a

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Communist country, he loyally clung to his belief against all odds and in the face of innumerable conflicts of principle and conscience. The *Arbeitsjournal* which starts in the summer of 1938 contains ample evidence of Brecht's exasperation at the official Stalinist line in aesthetics, *i.e.* "socialist realism":

> ". . . they talk again about realism, a term they have now succeeded in abasing in the same way in which the Nazis have abased the term socialism" (July 1938).

The villain of the piece and Brecht's main bugbear here is Georg Lukacs, who was extolling the "realism" of the masters of the great bourgeois novel, Sir Walter Scott, Balzac, and Thomas Mann:

> "People like Sholokhov and Thomas Mann are being justified by the argument that they depict reality. Between the bourgeois and the proletarian realists we are told there is no difference (and indeed a glance at writers like Sholokhov seems to prove that view); nor, probably, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat itself? How else could it be, under the banner of the Popular Front? Long live Pastor Niemoeller! That realist of the purest water!"

This is an attack against Stalin from the Left. Brecht was as distressed by the Popular Front, collaboration with the Social Democrats and Liberals as he later was about Stalin's pact with Hitler.

On the day Hitler occupied Warsaw Brecht tried to convince himself that Stalin had had to act because the Western powers were not really willing to wage war against Nazi Germany. Nevertheless, he admitted,

> ". . . the Soviet Union now carries, in front of the world proletariat, the terrible stigma of having helped the Fascists, the most savage, the most anti-working-class part of capitalism, I don't think that one can, at the moment, say more than that the Soviet Union has saved itself at the cost of having left the world proletariat without a watchword, without hope and without help."

And when, nine days later, Stalin actually grabbed half of Poland, Brecht added:

> ". . . it is hard to get used to the naked reality, the tearing down of all ideological façades. There we have the fourth partition of Poland, the abandonment of the principle that 'the USSR needs not an inch of foreign soil', the appropriation of Fascist hypocrisies about 'our kith and kin', the liberation of 'our brothers' (of Slav descent), the whole nationalist terminology. All this is being said with an eye towards the German Fascists, but, at the same time, also to the Soviet troops" (18 September 1939).

These remarks show that Brecht, whose keen political grasp has never been in doubt, very well understood the close similarities between totalitarian systems. If, in the above passage, he realised the nationalistic aspects of Soviet propaganda, he also saw the Leninist origins of Hitlerism. While reading Boris Souvarine's biography of Stalin he noted:

> "The transformation of a professional revolutionary into a bureaucrat, of a whole revolutionary party into a civil service does, indeed, gain a new significance through the rise of Fascism. The German petty bourgeoisie borrows, in its attempt to create state capitalism, certain institutions (complete with the relevant ideological material) from the Russian proletariat, which is trying to create a state socialism. In Fascism socialism sees its distorted mirror-image, with none of its virtues, but all its vices" (9 July 1943).

No wonder Brecht was dismayed when he found that the German Communist party in Soviet-Stalinist exile was becoming more and more nationalistic (closely mirroring the Great-Russian nationalism of Moscow's War-time propaganda). When confronted with an article by Johannes R. Becher, the German ex-Expressionist poet who later became cultural boss in the *DDR*, Brecht remarked:

> ". . . this stinks of nationalism. Again Hitler's nationalism is here quite naively adopted. It's just that Hitler has the wrong brand; Becher has the correct one. We must 'create' the 'type' of a 'new German national literature'. . . . He demands that the 'weaknesses of so-called left-wing literature' should be overcome; these weaknesses, I suppose, are precisely its left-wing nature. This is terribly opportunistic rubbish, a reformism of nationalism. . ." (10 November 1943).

IN THE LIGHT OF THESE MISGIVINGS it becomes quite clear why Brecht hesitated so long before he returned to Germany and even longer before he accepted the offer in East Berlin. Indeed, when he finally arrived there, to discuss the prospects of founding his own company of actors, he remained extremely cautious.

> "Peace demonstration of the *Kulturbund* [the Party's front organisation for left-wing and 'progressive' intellectuals]. [Arnold] Zweig is present and makes a speech. I myself do not speak, determined as I am to have a look round and not to make public statements" (24 October 1948).

And on the following day Brecht notes down his impressions of the situation in the Russian zone of occupation:

> "Still, after three years, I generally hear, the panic among the workers, caused by the looting and rapes after the conquest of Berlin, casts its ripples. In the working-class areas the liberators had been awaited with open arms, but the encounter deteriorated into a rape, which did not spare either seventy-year-old women or twelve-year-old girls and was carried out in open view of all. . . . After the material devastation which the Nazi armies caused in their country the Russian Communists will now also have to cope with the psychological

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devastation which Hitler's war of conquest has wreaked among the *muzhiks* who had just been thrown into the process of civilisation after having been dehumanised by Tsarist rule" (25 October 1948).

It is touching to see how desperately Brecht tried to defend the Soviet Union, even at the cost of his knowledge of history or, indeed, his Marxism. For the Russian soldiers who carried out these rapes surely were mostly in their twenties and had spent their entire life under the Soviet régime. If they were *still* dehumanised that can hardly have been the fault of Tsarism, considering that the achievements of the first Five-Year-Plans (which were greeted by Communists like Brecht as the establishment of a humane society from the early 1930s onwards) must have been fully enjoyed by soldiers born around 1920. But Brecht always tended to be more sympathetic towards the Russians than his German compatriots. When he was introduced to the Burgomaster of East Berlin, Friedrich Ebert, his impression was far from favourable:

"The *Herr Oberbuergermeister* said neither 'good day' nor 'good-bye' to me, did not even directly address me and merely uttered a sceptical sentence about uncertain projects which might impair existing things [Brecht was planning the foundation of the Berliner Ensemble]. . . . For the first time I felt the stinking breath of provincialism here" (6 January 1949).

Nevertheless Brecht did get his Berliner Ensemble. But at the height of Stalin's campaign against "cosmopolitanism" and "formalism" in the arts the new venture went through some very hard times. Having boasted to the world about having secured the cooperation of Germany's greatest playwright the authorities could not openly close down his theatre. But they did their best to show their displeasure:

"Our performances in Berlin have almost no echo. In the press notices appear months after the first performance, and they contain nothing but a few miserable sociological analyses. The public is the petty bourgeois public of the Volksbuehne [the trade unions' organisation for the sale of reduced-price tickets to blue-collar workers who wanted to better themselves intellectually], workers amount to barely 7% among them. Our efforts can only be regarded as not totally pointless if our style of acting might be taken up at a future point in time, *i.e.* if their instructional value can one day be realised" (4 March 1953—the day before Stalin's death!).

When in my book on Brecht (which was based on the evidence of his own writings and interviews with numerous close friends of his)[4] I ventured to suggest that the events of 17 June 1953, the day of the East German workers' rising, must have had a terrible impact on a man like Brecht who had structured his life around the conviction that the Communist Party was the party of the workers, I was accused of wishful thinking and of vilifying a great man. Now we can read Brecht's own view of the matter:

"The 17th of June has alienated the whole of existence" (20 August 1953).

A few weeks later he reports a conversation with a plumber who was carrying out some work at his country cottage in Buckow and who was complaining bitterly about the régime:

Under Hitler the bureaucracy [he said] was also inflated, but then there was more money around. The Russians were trying to impose their Asiatic culture on Europe. . . . What we needed were free elections. I said: "Then the Nazis would be elected" (12 September 1953).

Almost a decade after the end of the War, after many years of Communist rule, Brecht thus still felt that East Germany was a country inhabited by Nazis. And he felt that not only about the anonymous crowds of stony-faced workers in the streets but also about his closest and most enthusiastic disciples and collaborators:

"The country still gives me the creeps. Recently, when I had driven to Buckow with young people from our Dramaturgie [the Ensemble's script section] I sat in the garden room in the evening, while they were working or talking in their rooms. Ten years ago, it suddenly occurred to me, all three of them, if they had read anything I had written and I had been in their presence, would instantly have handed me over to the *Gestapo*" (7 July 1954).

This is one of the very last entries in Brecht's "working diary." The remaining two years of his life yield barely five pages of short jottings. And that silence too is significant.

There is little in all these diaries and, indeed, in Voelker's biography (which does assemble a lot of factual information about Brecht's private life) that was not known before. When I was gathering material for my book on Brecht twenty years ago I heard it all from the many close friends and associates of Brecht whom I questioned about him and I used that information to the full.[5]

[4] Martin Esslin, *Brecht—A Choice of Evils*, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1959; US edition: Brecht—*The Man and His Work*, New York, Doubleday 1960; new revised edition, 1971. Paperback: Heinemann Educational Books; Norton Paperbacks.

[5] Recently a prominent academic introducing a lecture of mine to a hall full of students complimented me on my good "guesses" in the book which by good fortune had now been proved true. There is a curious fetishism in academic circles which attaches greater value to written, documentary evidence than to first-hand oral reports—as though what is written down could not be equally false, as though a good deal of the information contained in letters, diaries and memoirs were not, indeed, much more likely to be deliberately mendacious than oral evidence elicited under close questioning!

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But now the publication of the diaries has provided some documentary evidence for what emerged clearly enough from a careful reading of the plays and poems alone.

And what does that amount to? Simply to confirm that behind the icons of the saints of totalitarian religions like present-day Party-line Communism—those giant cardboard images carried aloft in processions between the banners bearing simple-minded slogans proclaiming tautological half-truths—that behind these inhuman images (of which Brecht's ironically has become one in the *DDR*) there stands, and has always stood, a human being made up of a highly differentiated composite of often contradictory reactions, vacillating opinions, mixtures of idealistic and opportunistic attitudes, hidden thoughts and deceptive public gestures. Even in his own diary (as early as 1942, when he was living in America) Brecht felt he had to present a less than wholly candid picture of his thoughts for fear of possible readers of his notes (see above). Why? Because the concept of discipline, the need to present a monolithic front to the outside world compel adherents of totalitarian creeds into attitudes of concealment. The need to suppress the true complexity and contradictoriness of one's daily thoughts (the old-fashioned word for it would be "hypocrisy") becomes total in a country where the totalitarian party has become the government. Hence the resort to simplistic and Byzantine slogans, to generally agreed and recognisable formulae which tend to dehumanise the public image of politicians and writers in such countries. And this is harmful not only to the public images of such personalities abroad, but also to themselves; for it forces them into a schizophrenia of public pathos and private cynicism. When Hanns Eisler, a close associate and friend of Brecht's, a brilliant composer and a man of sharp intelligence, was once asked by a friend, who had met him in a Paris bar, how life was in the *DDR*, he replied with a knowing wink: "Even Capitalism has its drawbacks. . . ." Such an attitude has driven more than one man of talent to drink. It cannot be healthy.

And in many cases it becomes unendurable. Many of the intellectual leaders in the *DDR* who were closest to Brecht—men like Hans Mayer, Peter Huchel, Ernst Bloch—eventually moved to West Germany, as did many of Brecht's disciples and admirers among his collaborators in the Berliner Ensemble (Peter Palitzsch, Carl Weber, Egon Monk, to mention but some of the most gifted among his pupils). The poet who shows the influence of Brecht most clearly and decisively among the younger generation in the *DDR*, Wolf Biermann, was recently expelled by the authorities.

It is idle to speculate whether Brecht, had he lived longer, might not also have reached such a breaking point—perhaps during the Hungarian uprising (October 1956) which came a few months after he died; or when the Berlin Wall was built (1961); or after the invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968). Ernst Fischer, the Austrian Communist leader and one of the finest intellectuals of Brecht's generation, reached that point at the precise moment when Dubcek's quixotic attempt at creating "Communism with a human face" collapsed. I remember a conversation with Ernst Fischer when the floodgates of long-suppressed misgivings had been swept away and the anger and disappointment of years of pretence poured out. He stressed again and again that Brecht had been in "exactly the same position." Much in the diaries and in Brecht's late poems seems to confirm this view. Yet again the need to protect his theatre, the place where one day his ideas and his practice might become the fountainhead of a new style of drama, might have persuaded Brecht to go on mouthing the ritual formulae of the Party line.

PERHAPS HIS FORMIDABLE CYNICISM might have enabled him to carry on even under the most unfavourable conditions. In sexual matters he had always possessed the monumental and self-ironical callousness of his first creation, the anti-social and monstrously self-indulgent poet Baal. He retained it to the very end. Klaus Voelker reports that when he fell in love with Isot Kilian, the wife of the Marxist philosopher Wolfgang Harich, Brecht told him in 1954: "Get a divorce from her—you can marry her again in two years' time! . ." (Voelker, p. 388). It was to her that he dictated his last will and testament in which he left the copyright of some of his plays to Ruth Berlau (the Danish actress who had followed him across the world to California and East Berlin) and to a number of his other mistresses and friends. This will, apparently, was not properly witnessed through an oversight. Brecht's wife, Helene Weigel, succeeded in having it ruled out of order. So, with truly Brechtian irony, bourgeois respectability triumphed and the legitimate spouse asserted her socially sanctioned superiority. A friend of Brecht's who attended his funeral once described the scene to me: "There were five widows there, all dressed in solemn mourning black. Four of them were crying. One was laughing—Helene Weigel. . . ."

Ruth Berlau (1906–1974), a brilliant actress and a beautiful woman, was the most tragic among the many women in Brecht's life. She had left her well-to-do husband and her position as a

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leading actress of the Copenhagen Royal Theatre in the 1930s and followed Brecht to America, always on the tacit understanding that Brecht would eventually set up house with her alone. When this hope proved illusory she gradually deteriorated through drink and was finally barred from the Berliner Ensemble (where she had worked as the house photographer, making a detailed record of Brecht's production) after Brecht's death. The effects of drink and distress led to a series of nervous breakdowns. A recently published manuscript from Ruth Berlau's papers gives an insight into the realities behind Brecht's cynical polygamy. It recounts one of Ruth Berlau's dreams and deserves, I think, publication in full; it is a remarkable document.

> "The roof collapses. And I notice that I am on fire. Funny, the hair around my lap was the first to catch fire. That I can extinguish—I reach there with both hands and try to smother the flames with the wetness of my lap. I raise my right hand, it burns like a torch, my right hand. I am pointing to him—for now you have joined me. You are standing a few yards away and you are talking to many people, you are looking diagonally towards me, and then continue talking. I can hear some of your sentences: for you it is a matter of life and death for your works. But I, once more, show the torch, my burning right hand and I am softly crying through the night: 'Bertolt.' Once more you look round and you say menacingly: 'If you turn to cold ash, it's all over. That is no use to me.' I am trying to indicate to you: there is a star missing in Cassiopeia; that's what started the fire, this missing star has hit me. You shake your head; you don't even look up to the sky. I notice you think I have gone mad again, and Weigel takes your arm and says: 'Get the fire brigade. Only the fire brigade is concerned with this. If there is a fire one has to get the fire brigade. You cannot help.' Quickly I see how you give the order, one must call the fire brigade. At that moment a second star falls out of Cassiopeia. But the fire brigade is already here and takes me in and covers me up. . . ."[6]

This is the nightmare of a woman at the edge of madness, but it mirrors a great deal of the atmosphere of Brecht's life behind the façade of cheerful cynicism.

And there is no shortage of signs that behind the façade of political conformism also there was a much darker side. The German actor Klaus Kinski describes in his memoirs how Brecht, who had invited him to join the Berliner Ensemble, reacted to his refusal: "I myself would advise you against it. I have a fool's freedom in the East. But to deal with you one needs a great sense of humour, and that they haven't got."[7]

WHAT RELEVANCE have such biographical details to the study of a great poet and important playwright like Brecht?

Intrinsically, none whatever. The value of a poem or a play remains unaffected by the psychological background or the political attitude of its creator. After all, we do not know much of these things in the case of many great playwrights from Aeschylus to Shakespeare; and that does not impair the impact of their works one jot. Yet, in Brecht's case it is precisely the demands of totalitarian partisans and laudators of the writer that compel such biographical scrutiny. It is they who impose their monolithic façade, who try to suppress entire works—and works surely are relevant to a study of an author even if one leaves all biographical considerations outside the scope of one's inquiries. It is they who drag the biography—or rather the hagiographic version of the biography—into the arena of public scrutiny. A writer can be judged by his works alone; but a saint is worshipped for his total personality. And once he is worshipped for a false, distorted, mendacious image of his personality and that image used as an argument in political debate, it must surely become necessary to subject that image to a reasoned critique based on a full presentation of the evidence.

Moreover, Bertolt Brecht was a political poet who wanted to have a political impact. Such a poet, admittedly, can and must be studied for his poetry and his aesthetic effect. But the political subject matter also imposes the duty to inquire into the truth, the correctness, of the facts, the soundness of the political ideology it propounds. Such a poet can no longer simply be subjected to the "structural" analysis of the *formal* aspects of his work. In Brecht's case it is precisely his partisans who should reject such a methodology as the depths of decadent formalism. Inevitably, therefore, the study and analysis of a poet like Brecht involves an examination of the public implications of his plays, poems and novels, and consequently also an inquiry into the genesis and real nature of his political ideas. And again, it is the totalitarian concept of politics which inevitably also politicises the private personality

[6] Ruth Berlau, "Ein Traum" in *Material Brecht-Kontradiktionen 1968–1976.* (Berlin, Wolfgang Storch, 1976.)

[7] Klaus Kinski, *Ich bin so wild nach deinem Erdbeermund* (Munich, 1975).

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and the private life of the individual involved. For if it is officially proclaimed that a good Party adherent does not want to travel to the West, the fact that someone who subscribes to the Party line makes elaborate arrangements to enable himself to travel freely (such as Brecht's acquisition of an *Austrian* passport) becomes a political act. And so does the maintenance of a harem in a society which insists that a good Party man and Marxist-Leninist socialist must be strictly monogamous. That, after all, is the reason why the sexual transgressions of parsons (who proclaim a similar organic connection between private beliefs and public actions) receive more publicity in the popular press than those of individuals not associated with propagating an ideology which claims to dominate every aspect of a person's life.

BRECHT HIMSELF NEVER tired of stressing the *scientific* nature of Marxism and its methodology and his belief that he had, in fact, supplied the foundations of a truly scientific aesthetics of drama; that he had made drama an instrument of scientific inquiry, an experimental laboratory of human social and political behaviour. He thus, paradoxically, put himself outside the bounds of the purely aesthetic and "new criticism" style of analysis.

Hence the absurdity of much of the current Brecht-scholasticism in Germany and throughout the West. Here Brecht's theoretical writings (which he himself repeatedly stressed are by no means aprioristic principles but derived, *a posteriori*, from his practice, *i.e.* his taste and inspiration of the moment) are subjected to endless scrutiny as to their sources in Hegel and Marx without anyone ever actually using an empirical method and asking the basic questions: To what extent would these foundations themselves stand up to scrutiny? and do they *actually work*? Do the alienation effects actually inhibit the spectator from feeling involved? Are the postulated political effects really achieved? Is the consciousness of audiences actually affected in the manner postulated by Brecht?

Here there is a vast field of inquiry which has, as yet, hardly been approached. But here, too, the first step would be to establish how much of Brecht's theorising was seriously meant, and how much of it was merely a way of gaining philosophical respectability for what were, basically, simply his creative instincts. At this point one gets back to a critical discussion of the facts of his biography and his psychology. It was Brecht himself who put himself out of the bounds of purely literary "*text-immanent*" research. And that, indeed, is the reason why he is not only a purely literary figure, but one of the great paradigmatic personalities of our age.

The Tenant

Size embarrassed by the tiny room,
He sits like a slag heap.
He pushes the air
As much as it presses him.
Someone, whose arms are not his,
Fills a hollow, does not know him,
Does things he does not authorise,
But cannot stop.

The noise of a wasp
Enters like a necklace, round, continuous,
Flies out, whittled to a dot, gone,
Leaving him the right scale,
Amazed at his own form, shape, solidity.

Uneasy what to do,
He cleans his toenails with a matchstick,
Picks the varnish, slowly, from the chair,
Carries his feelings in a vessel
Sealed as flesh is.

Claire Glasman

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Ted Hughes

Mount Zion

I

Blackness
Was a building blocking the moon.
Its wall—my first world-direction—
Mt Zion's gravestone slab.

Above the kitchen window, that uplifted mass
Was a deadfall—
Darkening the sun of every day
Right to the eleventh hour.

Marched in under, gripped by elders
Like a jibbing calf
I knew what was coming.
The convicting holy eyes, the convulsed Moses mouthings.
They were terrified too.
A mesmerised commissariat,
They terrified me, but they terrified each other.
And Christ was only a naked bleeding worm
Who had given up the ghost.

Women bleak as Sunday rose-gardens
Or crumpling to puff-pastry, and cobwebbed with deaths.
Men in their prison-yard, at attention,
Exercising their cowed, shaven souls,
Lips stretching saliva, eyes fixed like the eyes
Of cockerels hung by the legs,
As the bottomless cry
Beat itself numb again against Wesley's foundation stone.

Alarm shouts at dusk!
A cricket had rigged up its music
In a crack of Mt Zion wall.
A cricket! The news awful, the shouts awful, at dusk—
Like the bear-alarm, at dusk, among smoky tents—
What was a cricket? How big is a cricket?

Long after I'd been smothered in bed
I heard them
Riving at the religious stonework
With screwdrivers and chisels.

II

The Ancient Briton lay under his rock,
Under the oaks, the glittering leaves of Sunday.

He was happy no longer existing
Happy being nursery school history

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A few vague words
A stump of local folk-lore.

A whorl in our ignorance.

That valley needed him, dead in his cave-mouth,
Bedded on bones of cave-bear, sabre-tooth.
We needed him. The Mighty Hunter.

We dug for him. We dug to be sure.

Hot brows, Sunday after Sunday.
Iron levers.

We needed that waft from the cave
The dawn dew-chilling of emergence,
The hunting grounds untouched all around us.

Meanwhile his pig-headed rock existed.
A slab of time, it surely did exist.
Loyal to the day, it did not cease to exist.

As we dug it waddled and squirmed deeper.
As we dug, slowly, a good half ton,
It escaped us, taking its treasure down.

And lay beyond us, looking up at us

Labouring in the prison
Of our eyes, our sun, our Sunday bells.

Neil Powell

Somewhere

Logs are being sawn somewhere:
Easing through the softened air,

Heavy with rain and sodden leaves,
The sound of blade on timber gives

An edge to cloud's infinities.
Mist buttresses the nervous trees,

Smoke jostles where the cloud resists,
But there below the saw persists.

The blade gives edge to what it takes.
The world is split. The timber breaks.

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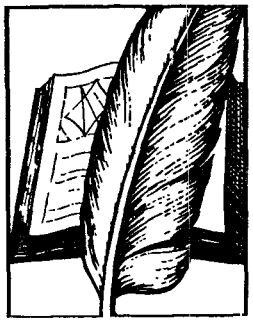

Column

WAR IS SO HORRIBLE that on the whole we prefer to avert our eyes from what it is really like. This in no way prevents us from being interested in its causes and results, or the reasons why it ends in defeat or victory, or trying to reduce its confusion and incoherence to some kind of order. Equally, we give free rein to the emotions and the moral reactions which the idea of war in the abstract inspires in us. But it is war as we find it in the accounts of military historians, or in the problems which it suggests to moralists, or in the behaviour of statesmen and generals, that interests us. The reality of it so far surpasses our comprehension or our imagination that usually it escapes us altogether. When William James wrote a famous essay called "The Moral Equivalent of War", he seems to have left out of account that war may be a phenomenon of such a kind that, though there may be other equivalents for it, there cannot be a moral one.

A few rare books, however, seem to bring the reality of war so close to us that our normal reactions are swept aside, and for a moment we can capture that sense of stunned bewilderment and amazement which men feel on the battlefield itself. Such books are rare because they require of the writer qualities which are not often found in combination. He must be sensitive enough to register the full horror of what he is writing about, yet at the same time detached enough to record it dispassionately. He must understand the infinitely mixed motives which actuate men when they engage in the act of war, and must also accept that such motives rarely find any satisfaction in what happens on the battlefield. He must see that war is evil, but may also be the agent of the good. He must know that war, though the product of huge and irresistible historical forces, is also made up of innumerable individual acts which are mostly impossible to relate to the changes which war brings about.

Thus when, exceptionally, a writer engages in the all but hopeless task of trying to depict what war is really like and means, and comes very near to doing so, we should acknowledge what an extraordinary feat he has attempted. Such a feat has, I think, been actually achieved by Milovan Djilas in his account of the campaign waged by the Communist partisans in Yugoslavia in the Second World War. Perhaps one should not be surprised by Djilas's achievement, because he is an extraordinary and exceptional man, of whom one might say that nothing was beyond his powers, except perhaps knowingly to prefer the worse to the better cause. In two previous books, *Conversations with Stalin* and *The New Class*, he has made an essential contribution to the understanding of our own time. One of the founding fathers of Marshal Tito's régime in Yugoslavia, he has today been stripped of all political power and lives in retirement in Belgrade, unmolested but considered too dangerous to be allowed to travel abroad. One cannot help feeling grateful that perhaps this enforced retirement should have created the opportunity for him to compose his account of the partisan war in Yugoslavia.

THE TITLE OF Djilas's book, which is quite simply *Wartime*,[1] might suggest that it was just another commentary on the military art in general. It is, on the contrary, a meticulously detailed account of Djilas's experiences, as a political commissar and representative of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party, with the partisan forces between 1941 and 1945. They took him from Montenegro through Herzogovina, Bosnia and Croatia to Slovenia and back again, and finally via Italy to Moscow, where he had his first meeting with Stalin. His journey carried him through some of the wildest and most savage districts of Yugoslavia and was punctuated by a series of military engagements conducted, under conditions of the greatest possible hardship and deprivation, by the partisan forces to which Djilas was attached.

These forces were rarely in more than battalion strength and, in fact, never played more than a minor part in deciding the eventual future of Yugoslavia. Their first objective was, like all guerrilla forces, to maintain themselves in being, as a token of Yugoslavia's will to resist the German and Italian invaders of their country, and of the Communist Party's determination that resistance should take a specifically revolutionary form. In successfully achieving these objectives, the partisans displayed extraordinary courage, fortitude, endurance, heroism. At the same time they indulged in crimes, murders, massacres, executions of a savagery which could not be justified under any moral code, except of course a code which holds that the end always justifies the means.

To be sure, the partisans were not alone in their excesses. Under the pressure of invasion Yugoslavia had become the scene of a savage war of all against all, in which foreign invaders, patriots, royalists, religious sects, revolutionaries all murdered each other indiscriminately. Draza

[1] *Wartime*. By MILOVAN DJILAS. Translated by Michael B. Petrovich. Secker & Warburg, £7.95; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $16.95.

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Mihailovitch's Chetniks took up arms for the king, but their weapons were turned against their fellow-countrymen rather than the invader. In Croatia, Pavelic's Ustashi tried by violence and terror to establish an independent state based on racialist and fascist principles. The partisans, wherever they could establish themselves, fought and killed in the service of revolutionary nationalism and the ultimate victory of Communism and the Red Army. In the territories under their control, Germans and Italians impartially killed anyone who impeded their military operations. Nor was religion behindhand. Catholics murdered Orthodox; and both murdered, and were murdered by, Muslims. And in the end the Red Army itself, in its triumphant campaign to liberate Yugoslavia, celebrated its victory with an orgy of bloodshed, rape, looting and drunkenness which shocked even their Yugoslav allies.

IT IS ONE OF THE great merits of Djilas's book that, though of course he considers the Partisans alone justified, among all these warring tribes, sects, races, armies, in the objectives which they set themselves, he does not pretend that in their methods of achieving them they in any way differed from their rivals. Like the others, and with the same indifference to any moral restraints on the violence used by man against man, they killed their prisoners, conducted reprisals against hostile villages and massacred their inhabitants, looted, tortured, devastated. In one vivid scene he relates how, being encumbered by a German prisoner who would have been a nuisance to his detachment, he personally slit his throat. It is also evidence of the fairness of his testimony that he generously praises the conduct of the German troops who, when their Balkan front finally collapsed, conducted an heroic retreat from Greece through Yugoslavia. In this respect, the behaviour of the German troops in defeat was in striking contrast with that of the victorious Red Army.

Djilas himself was profoundly shocked by the behaviour of the liberators of his country. For the first time it crossed his mind that perhaps the Red Army might not be exclusively composed of the immaculate revolutionary heroes of his imagination. But when he was despatched on a military mission to Moscow and complained to Stalin about the Red Army's conduct, Stalin dismissed his protest with the comment that nothing else was to be expected of soldiers celebrating victory after unexampled hardship and suffering. It throws a revealing light on Djilas's state of mind that at that moment he could not decide whether Stalin's attitude was the result of a profound cynicism or an equally profound understanding of human nature. But in fact the conversation was the begining of a process which stripped him of all illusions about the Soviet Union, and finally led to Djilas's fall from power in Yugoslavia.

IT WOULD BE EASY TO SAY, of course, that the atrocities in which Djilas's book abounds simply arose from the fact that the partisans were engaged, not only in a war of resistance, but in a civil and a revolutionary war. It is a commonplace of history that men fight most cruelly and savagely against those who are nearest and closest to them. They are perfectly ready to commit atrocities against the stranger. But they seem to carry them out with added zest and enthusiasm against their brothers, and all the more so if they are acting in the service of a high ideal. Mere self-preservation, it seems, is not enough to inflame men's instinct for murder to the highest pitch. For that they need the sanction of a higher power, human or divine, and that particularly virulent form of hatred which they only cherish for a neighbour.

Yet in fact the atrocities which Djilas records are not really exclusive, or particular, to civil wars; they do not differ in quality or kind from those which occur in other forms of warfare. After all, on the glorious field of Agincourt, King Henry V cold-bloodedly ordered the execution of all the prisoners that had been taken because they might hinder the progress of operations. Agincourt is still remembered as a noble English victory. But among the prayers that were said for all the souls of the faithful departed on that battlefield, I doubt if many were said for the ghosts of King Henry's murdered French prisoners. Djilas may have been shocked by Stalin's benevolent and paternal attitude towards the excesses of his troops. But we should always remember that, on the battlefield, the prospect of loot and generous supplies of alcohol have always been essential incentives to men to do their worst to each other.

Djilas's book is remarkable because it does justice to both of the paradoxical and contradictory faces of war. For every atrocity he recounts there is some equivalent act of courage, idealism, and self-sacrifice; for every display of heroism, and there are many, a balancing figure of cruelty and murder. It is perhaps precisely because of its paradoxical nature that war still retains so strange a power over men's hearts and men's minds; but we need books like Djilas's if we are to understand both sides of the paradox.

★

A LETTER FROM Senator Conor Cruise O'Brien in *The Times* of 4 October reminds us that there are some kinds of praise which we could do better without. In a previous issue of *The Times*, Mr Bernard Levin had contributed an article, entitled "Ireland Deserves to Sink if It

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Turns its Back on Men like This", which enthusiastically praised and endorsed Senator O'Brien's condemnation of the IRA's campaign of terrorism in Ulster, and also his view that the Irish people, either in the North or the South, had no such passionate desire for the unification of Ireland as to lend any kind of justification, however implausible, to such a campaign. In the course of this he also quoted extensively from Senator O'Brien's October ENCOUNTER article on "Liberty & Terror."

I myself fully agree with Senator O'Brien on both these points, and therefore gladly join Mr Levin in praising him; for to say such things in Ireland, to the Irish, is still not easy. But everything I know about Anglo-Irish relations convinces me that Englishmen should be extremely cautious about intervening in them, whether by way of praise or blame, unless they wish to add to the difficulties of a situation which, mostly through their own faults, has for centuries been pretty well intolerable.

Mr Levin's article is a good example of well-meaning but ill-judged intervention in such affairs. As Senator O'Brien says in his letter, ". . .while I am grateful to Mr Levin for the warmth of his approbation, I could wish that he had expressed it in another way. It is embarrassing for any man to find praise for himself combined with what appear to be racial insults directed at the people to which he belongs." Senator O'Brien goes on to say that he is sure Mr Levin did not mean to be insulting, and was writing "in a vein of humorous, truculent hyperbole, which is itself rather Irish." Unfortunately, he adds, "the history of relations between our two countries is such that when such language crosses the channel, the humorous overtones in it fade out."

How right he is! On this side of the channel it may seem amusing to say, as Mr Levin does: "There are times when the traditional and popular solution to the problems of Ireland—to tow it into the middle of the Atlantic and sink it—commends itself almost irresistibly to anyone contemplating its condition", adding that "the problems of Ireland are eternally insoluble because the Irish do not want them solved." Mr Levin went on to say that if it is the case that the Irish people "don't even believe the myth they vote for", then "Ireland is indeed hopeless, and a contract should immediately be placed (perhaps, by a delicate irony, with Harland and Wolff) for the construction of stout hawsers with which the assembled fleets of the world (I envisage a multinational operation, taking place under the aegis of the United Nations) will tow the entire island to its last resting-place."

I really am not surprised that this kind of "humorous and truculent hyberbole" is not greatly appreciated across the channel, or that Senator O'Brien should ask to be spared any more of it, especially from an admirer. To me at least Mr Levin's article is pervaded by those hardly concealed feelings of malice, dislike and contempt, perhaps despair, which have always characterised the English in their dealings with the Irish. And if such feelings make their way to the surface even in so sensitive, humane and sophisticated a person as Bernard Levin, what hope can there ever be of any genuine reconciliation, or even of understanding, between the English and the Irish?

PERHAPS THE SAD CONCLUSION is that no such thing will ever be possible, and that between the Anglo-Saxon and the Celt there lies an abyss which can never be bridged. I am reminded of a famous and brilliant passage, describing Mr Lloyd George, in J. M. Keynes' *The Economic Consequences of the Peace:*

> "How can I convey to the reader, who does not know him, any just impression of this extraordinary figure of our time, this syren, this goat-footed bard, this half-human visitor to our age from the hag-ridden magic and enchanted woods of Celtic antiquity? One catches in his company that flavour of final purposelessness, inner irresponsibility, existence outside and away from our Saxon good and evil, mixed with cunning, remorselessness, love of power, that lend fascination, enthralment and terror to the fair-seeming magicians of North European folklore."

What is it about a Celt, though in this case a Welshman and not an Irishman, which reduces even one of the most supremely intelligent of Englishmen to a condition in which he can write, as here, something which is very near to rubbish? "Hag-ridden magic", indeed! Celtic antiquity is no more hag-ridden than English, and neither so hag-ridden as Keynes is in this passage. "Our Saxon good and evil"? What is that but the eternal moral complacency of the Englishman faced by what he takes to be an inferior, if interesting, race? Perhaps one ought to forgive Keynes on the score of the same "humorous and truculent hyperbole" which Conor Cruise O'Brien ascribes to Bernard Levin. And indeed in 50 years Englishmen, even very intelligent ones, have in such matters changed very little. But perhaps by now one might ask them to cease using a neighbour on whom they have inflicted untold evil as a butt for their sometimes elephantine humour. *R*

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I don't think I can face Christmas shopping this year - all those crowds and queues, all that expensive parcel packing and posting, all the worry of what to give...

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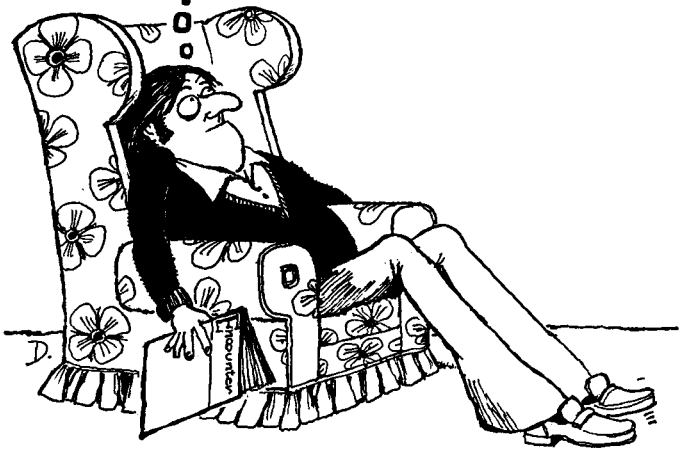

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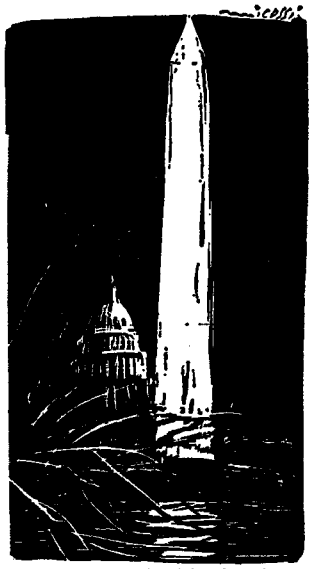
AMERICAN CHRONICLE

Intellectuals in Politics

By Theodore Draper



"INTELLECTUALS IN POLITICS" immediately raises two questions: What intellectuals? What politics?

Instead of trying to define these terms, which are so broad and loose that they defy exact definition, I prefer to start by name-dropping. To begin with, the names are Woodrow Wilson, Raymond Moley, Patrick Daniel Moynihan, Henry A. Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski. These names indicate the type of American intellectual with which I will be largely concerned. Three things can be said about them immediately. They went into politics, full-time or part-time, after they had established themselves professionally as intellectuals. The intellectual in politics is most often the professor in politics. And politics here does not refer merely to the realm of ideas or intellectual influence; it requires actual service in government. There are other types, such as intellectuals in revolutionary politics, but they are so different that they need a quite different approach.

The late Richard Hofstadter wrote an admirable book called *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (1963), much of which dealt with anti-intellectualism in American politics. He may have chosen anti-intellectualism rather than intellectualism because he thought that the former had deeper historical roots. Intellectuals in American politics are, in fact, a relatively recent phenomenon, limited almost wholly to the present century. Their history remains to be written.

IN THE 18th and early 19th centuries, from Thomas Jefferson to John Quincy Adams, the United States had intellectual politicians rather than intellectuals in politics. The distinction is important. The intellectual politician is a type of politician; the intellectual in politics is a type of intellectual. One makes his career in politics; the other comes to politics after making an intellectual career. The most happy reconciliation between intellectualism and politics was achieved by the intellectual politicians in the first half century of American life. It was not to be approached for another century.

Beginning with the Jacksonian Era in the 1830s intellectualism and politics drifted apart. Despite a few notable exceptions, intellectuals considered politics alien, politicians considered intellectuals politically useless. The historian George Bancroft, served as Secretary of the Navy and Minister to Great Britain and Germany. Edward Everett, a professor of Greek at Harvard University, was later Governor of Massachusetts, Minister to Great Britain, and US Senator. Henry Cabot Lodge was an assistant professor of history at Harvard before becoming a Senator. One 19th-century President, James A. Garfield, not one of the most distinguished, was for a short time, a teacher of classics and president of Hiram College, a small institution in Ohio. With one exception, these careers signified no trend. The exception was a tradition even in the 19th century of appointing intellectuals to diplomatic posts. But Presidents varied even in this respect, and it was at most a marginal affair.

THE INTELLECTUALS' DISTASTE for politics was, for most of the 19th century, matched by the politicians' disdain for intellectuals. An intellectual-political movement, known as "the genteel reformers", arose in the post-Civil War period but had little success. A Tammany Hall boss in the last quarter of the 19th century put the case against intellectuals in politics in this way:

> "Some young men think they can learn how to be successful in politics from books, and they cram their heads with all sorts of college rot. They couldn't make a bigger mistake. Now, understand me, I ain't sayin' nothin' against colleges. I guess they have to exist as long as there's bookworms, and I suppose they do some good in certain ways, but they don't count in politics."[1]

It is said that the first—or one of the first—American uses of the term "intellectual"

[1] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, p. 187.

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appeared in a letter by the philosopher, William James, in 1899.[2] James used the term in a context that had a direct bearing on the American attitude toward intellectuals in politics. Commenting on the Dreyfus case in France, James sympathised with the French intellectuals' "aggressively militant" role and hoped that they would grow "stronger and stronger." But then he turned around and thanked God for an America in which "intellectuals"—he still thought it necessary to put the word in quotation marks—could stay out of all corrupting "big institutions", which he blamed for Captain Dreyfus's ordeal. Except for the American "party spirit", James believed, American sources of corruption were trivial compared with the European. He did not say so in so many words but he seemed to imply that American intellectuals should stay out of politics and instead "work to keep our precious birthright of individualism" and seek fulfilment in "free personal relation." His emphasis on "freedom from all corrupting institutions" must have included the political in view of his conviction that "the only serious permanent force of corruption in America is party spirit."[3]

NEVERTHELESS, it was at the turn of the century that the institutionalisation of intellectuals in American politics began. Its birthplace was the state of Wisconsin where, under the leadership of Governor Robert M. La Follette, the outstanding political figure of the Progressive movement, the first successful experiment in achieving a symbiosis between a university and a government was attempted. A comprehensive programme was worked out to put academic "experts" of the University of Wisconsin at the service of the state government. Scientists, engineers, agronomists, economists, historians, political scientists and the like were systematically called on for advice and information. The Wisconsin system was nominally non-partisan; in fact, it was the servant of Progressive politics which was the only kind of politics willing and able to engage in such an experiment. Thus the Wisconsin experience produced a familiar type of intellectual in politics —the reformer working for a reform movement.

THE NEXT GREAT STEP forward by an American intellectual in politics was taken by Woodrow Wilson. In fact, he took the greatest step forward that any American intellectual has ever taken—right into the White House. Wilson was an authentic intellectual if ever there was one—Professor of Jurisprudence and Political Economy, President of Princeton University, author of basic works on the American political system. The story of how Wilson became a politician suggests the function sometimes reserved for intellectuals. When he was approached in 1910 to accept the Democratic nomination for Governor of the State of New Jersey, his stepping-stone to the presidency two years later, he examined his overworked conscience to find a good reason why he should give in to the temptation. He came up with the idea that "a new day had come in American politics." He interpreted the proposition, in effect, as the opening of a new era in American politics—the era of the intellectual in politics. Wilson later realised that he had naively deceived himself. His biographer notes that the New Jersey politician who masterminded Wilson's nomination "hoped to use Wilson as a respectable front behind which he could operate." It was not a role that Wilson could or would play, but he might never have started on his political career if some politician had not chosen him to play it.

I do not imagine that Wilson was the last intellectual whom politicians have intended to use as a "respectable front." But Wilson learned fast. One of the first things he had to do to win the governorship was to repudiate virtually everything he had stood for on the issue of trade unionism, which he had previously opposed.[4] In short, he had to learn how to act like a politician, not an intellectual, to gain power. For better or worse, however, Wilson unlearned this lesson in the course of his Presidency. He was always more the schoolmaster than the politician. The more power Wilson had, the less he was willing to compromise—a trait attributed to his intellectualism but perhaps more attributable to his character.

Far more than Wilson personally, the First World War opened the political door to intellectuals.

> "The war itself, ironically, raised many of them to heights of influence as no domestic issue could [Hofstadter observed]. Historians and writers were mobilised for propaganda, and experts of all kinds were recruited as advisers."[5]

They became so prominent that one Republican Senator protested, "This is a government by professors and intellectuals." He warned, not for the last time, that "intellectuals are good enough in their places, but a country run by professors is

[2] *Anti-Intellectualism . . .*, p. 39. Hofstadter says that the term *intellectual* first came into use in France and was "soon exported—at the time of the Dreyfus case" (p. 38). This seems hardly likely in view of the fact that the *Oxford English Dictionary* has an English usage of the term as far back as 1652, and three perfectly recognisable uses in the 19th century, one by Byron in 1813.

[3] *The Letters of William James*, edited by Henry James (1920), vol. II, pp. 100–101.

[4] Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The Road to the White House* (1947), pp. 149–50, 158.

[5] *Anti-Intellectualism . . .*, p. 211.

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ultimately destined to Bolshevism and an explosion."[6] The high point of this academic invasion came in 1919 when a group known as "The Inquiry" was organised to prepare the ground for American policy in the peace negotiations. It brought together 150 scholarly experts from many different fields, ranging from history to ethnology, aided by a staff of several hundred more of similar background.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR, then, might have been the decisive breakthrough of American intellectuals into political or at least governmental service. They were welcomed in unprecedented numbers and variety. Some lessons can be drawn from this experience. One is that the first large-scale incursion of American intellectuals into political life needed a national crisis which united the nation, including the intellectuals. The second is that intellectuals were drawn into government in large numbers when the functions or responsibilities of government were enormously enlarged. By vastly expanding the reach of government in the economic and social as well as the military sphere, the First World War temporarily created a need to tap a new and sizable reservoir of special training. Such a reservoir for a quick, massive infusion existed only in the universities and other schools. That a professor was President did not hurt, but another war showed that it was not necessary to have a professor as President to produce the same result.

The First World War did not constitute the decisive breakthrough because it was immediately followed by national disillusionment and Wilson's repudiation. The next administrations of Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover went back to the older system of using intellectuals selectively and even exceptionally. This War-time and post-War experience introduced an aspect of intellectuals in politics that has forcefully struck students of the subject. It is the cyclical nature of the phenomenon. This was the first time that American intellectuals went in and out of the revolving door of politics. For the first one hundred and fifty years of the Republic, then, it may be said that intellectuals in politics were not a common commodity and had not established a firm tradition. We can see gradual changes, but they were more of degree than of kind. The real breakthrough was still to come.

IT CAME WITH Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s. The story is familiar to students of Rooseveltiana, but it is worth repeating for what we can learn or relearn from it.

The intellectual breakthrough was a by-product of Roosevelt's presidential campaign before he was elected president. According to the most circumstantial version, candidate Roosevelt and his faithful factotum, Samuel I. Rosenman, were sitting around in March 1932 talking about how to organise the campaign. Roosevelt was a quick learner, but he had much to learn about national problems and policies. As Rosenman later recalled, he told Roosevelt that they ought to get some people together "and see whether we can come up with some answers or at least some good new intelligent thinking, pro and con, and some new ideas. . . ." Whom did Rosenman have in mind? Rosenman's answer suggests something important about the whole phenomenon:

> "Usually in a situation like this, a candidate gathers around him a group composed of some successful industrialists, some big financiers, and some national political leaders. I think we ought to steer clear of all those. They all seem to have failed to produce anything constructive to solve the mess we're in today. Now my idea is this: why not go to the universities of the country? You have been having some good experiences with college professors. I think they wouldn't be afraid to strike out on new paths just because the paths are new. They would get away from all the old fuzzy thinking on many subjects, and that seems to be the most important thing."[7]

Rosenman's version lends itself to a broad generalisation about the necessary social condition for such an intellectual breakthrough. "The mess we're in today" was, of course, the greatest economic crisis in American history.

A different kind of crisis had brought the Wilsonian intellectuals into politics. The Roosevelt crisis was far deeper, implying the bankruptcy of the whole social system, and the successful industrialists, big financiers, and national political leaders who dominated it. Roosevelt as governor of New York had already used professorial experts for specific problems and projects. Rosenman wanted to use professors to fill a general political vacuum—that was what was new about it. The way was opened for the early Rooseveltian intellectuals into politics not so much because Roosevelt was so different at that stage from previous American politicians but because the period in which he wanted to become President was so different. The economic crisis was the midwife of the Rooseveltian breakthrough for the intellectuals.

The first intellectual to be recruited into the Brain Trust, Professor Raymond Moley of Columbia University, did not like Rosenman's version because it gave Rosenman too much credit for the historic innovation. Moley's account

[6] Senator Lawrence Sherman, *Congressional Record*, (3 September, 1918) p. 9877.
[7] Samuel I. Rosenman, *Working With Roosevelt* (1952), p. 57.

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also lends itself to a larger consideration. The real reason for the Brain Trust, according to Moley, was Roosevelt's and Rosenman's extreme limitations in national affairs. They brought in the Professors because they had found them so useful during Roosevelt's governorship and had merely expanded the practice to broaden their political education.[8] No doubt the original Brain Trust—which soon included Professor Rexford Guy Tugwell and Professor Adolf A. Berle (both of Columbia), with Professor Felix Frankfurter (of the Harvard Law School) lurking in the wings—started as a curious sort of private seminar for Franklin D. Roosevelt. Tugwell called it a "course in socio-economics."[9] It thus served an educational purpose for which professorial intellectuals were particularly well fitted. Another presidential candidate might not have been so responsive. Nevertheless, it may be doubted whether Roosevelt would have had the incentive and patience to meet with the professors in long night sessions if economic conditions had been less ominous.[10]

THE LEARNING PROCESS, however, was not a one-way affair. One of Moley's admitted reasons for accepting the invitation to teach the future President was that the teacher was also going to learn—learn about politics from the inside or, as Moley put it, "satisfy my desire for wider experience in politics." He was not the last professor who has dealt with politics in the classroom and has sought to increase his knowledge of politics in the back rooms. Max Weber said that "either one lives 'for' politics or one lives 'off' politics."[11] Many an intellectual has lived for politics before living off politics, and then managed to live both for and off politics.

The Brain Trust did not long remain an informal educational institution. Politically, its key members served three main functions—as idea men, as talent scouts, and as speech writers. These functions have continued to be typical of those intellectuals whom we might call "generalists." Roosevelt himself once defined the Brain Trust's role in these words:

> "You study the problems, work out the best answers you can, and bring them to me, Don't mix in politics—it is unpleasant, sometimes a dirty business. Leave that to me."[12]

The tasks of intellectuals may also seem more glamorous from the outside than from the inside. Moley later complained that he was called to work on a speech "just as I'd be called in if I were a plumber and a pipe needed fixing."[13] Tugwell referred to himself as an "errand boy."[14]

THE EARLY BRAIN TRUSTERS had grave misgivings about switching from Professor to Politician. Moley fervently protested that he had no intention of giving up his intellectual freedom, his aspiration to be accepted "on the basis of what I had to say, rather than because I was part of a governmental machine", and his conviction that "honest teaching and writing about public affairs precluded not only White House cupbearing and administrative paper-shuffling, but party goose-stepping"—before being prevailed on by Roosevelt to give them up. Tugwell had a similar struggle with himself. When he first considered the prospect of an official post in Washington, he told himself that "from professor to the government is a great transformation." He also reflected: "If I am in the administration, I'll have to make endless compromises—a far different position from that of critical observer. . . ." But he soon capitulated and went to Washington. Berle held out the longest. He told a colleague that "all of us can be a good deal more useful hoeing our own row than monkeying with obscure under-secretaryships or commissionerships." Incidentally, Berle used to write letters to the President addressed to "DEAR CAESAR." Roosevelt once replied that he did not mind being called *Caesar* but hated being thought of as *Napoleon*.

The Rooseveltian Brain Trust as such was relatively short-lived. Raymond Moley, the key figure, defected from the New Deal in 1935. He disagreed on a matter of high policy, and I suppose his case might be taken to mean that intellectuals cannot be trusted to be unconditionally loyal to politicians, at least not as much as other politicians. Rex Tugwell, next in line, became the chief whipping boy of the anti-Roosevelt opposition; the attacks on him were easily as disgraceful as any later unleashed by Senator Joseph McCarthy. Not the least reason for Tugwell's vulnerability was his status as a professor and intellectual. By 1936, Tugwell had become such a political liability that Roosevelt did not try to save him. His case may illustrate another function of intellectuals in politics—as

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[8] Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (1939), pp. 5–6.

[9] Rexford G. Tugwell, *The Democratic Roosevelt* (1957), p. 218.

[10] These meetings are vividly described by Moley, pp. 20–21, and Rosenman, pp. 63–64.

[11] "Politics as a Vocation" (1918), in *From Max Weber* (ed. Gerth & Mills, 1947), p. 84.

[12] These words were said by Roosevelt to Berle but intended for the entire group. See Adolf A. Berle, *New Republic*, 7 March 1964, in *Navigating the Rapids* 1918–1971: *From the Papers of Adolf A. Berle* (1973), p. 114.

[13] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal* (1959), p. 549.

[14] Bernard Sternsher, *Rexford Tugwell and the New Deal* (1964), p. 308.

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scapegoats and sacrificial lambs. A. A. Berle stayed out of Washington until he accepted an appointment as Assistant Secretary of State in 1938 but lasted only about half-a-year in that office. (His real political career came somewhat later, a circumstance which enabled him to last longer and go further than the other two.)

So the political careers of the most famous early Brain Trusters were not too promising. Nevertheless, much more was happening during the first Roosevelt years to intellectuals lower down on the scale. Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., described the New Dealers in terms of the following occupations—"they were mostly lawyers, college professors, economists, or social workers." Lawyers had long had a virtual monopoly of the American government, but college professors in second place—that was something new. Presumably some of the economists as well as the social workers were intellectuals, too. The Brain Trust received most publicity but it was only the tip of the New Deal's intellectual iceberg. The Moleys and Tugwells played for big stakes and eventually lost; many others, less well known or less exposed, came and stayed. The larger influx had a more stable structural foundation; the New Deal brought into existence a whole series of government agencies and bureaucracies devoted to public works, social security, energy and reclamation, and reforms in many other fields. New agencies and new policies demanded new people and new capabilities. If professors did not get most of the new jobs, their students did.

THE NEW DEAL, HOWEVER, was only the first stage of the Rooseveltian breakthrough for the intellectuals. As the New Deal waned, the influence of its intellectuals declined. But for the Second World War, the United States might have gone through another cyclical movement of intellectuals in and out of government favour. The War completed the process which the New Deal began. With or without the New Deal, the War would have brought in intellectuals *en masse*. The First World War had already shown the way, but it had not gone so far because it had not lasted long enough (for the United States) and had not ended with the assumption of American responsibility for the fate of the world or at least the Western world. American intellectuals supported the Second World War with greater unity and enthusiasm. The new War agencies swallowed up thousands of older and younger intellectuals. Well over a hundred new agencies of the executive branch were formed during the course of the War. Many of the post-War intellectuals were infected with the political virus in these agencies, never to recover. The distinguished politicised intellectuals who came out of the Office of Strategic Services (or O.S.S., predecessor of the C.I.A.) could easily staff one or more good-sized universities.

The War and its aftermath produced a new type of American intellectual in politics. The earlier variety had almost always been brought in to advise on domestic policies, such as financial reform or criminal justice. "The Inquiry" of Wilson's day had been devoted to foreign affairs, but it had not been given an opportunity to do much beyond preparing documents and memoranda for the peace negotiations; and it had not been able to perpetuate itself.

Now a new breed of politicised intellectuals appeared—the foreign-affairs intellectuals. What had been a fairly small field became a minor industry with branches in international politics, international economics, international arms proliferation and control, foreign aid, area specialisation, and the like. Exotic fields could attract hundreds of specialists virtually overnight and flourish as long as the government or foundations were willing to subsidise them. If anything more were needed to reinvigorate the War-time and post-War boom in the procreation, care and feeding of politicised intellectuals, the Truman Doctrine of 1947 and the Marshall Plan of 1948 came just in time. They enabled large numbers of American intellectuals to fan out all over the world at government expense, scattering their largesse and advice far and wide. It was also a time for some to learn the difference between Meursault and Montrachet. All this has nothing to do with whether the War, the Doctrine, or the Plan were good or necessary; most American intellectuals thought they were. What is more to the point for our purpose is that they provided the political, structural and material foundation for the new breed of intellectuals. A different kind of United States was needed to produce a different kind of intellectual in politics. The rise of the United States as a pre-eminent world power was a necessary condition for the rise of the intellectual as an eminent political force in the United States.

NEVERTHELESS, THE PENDULUM continued to swing. The upsurge of McCarthyism in 1950 and the defeat of Adlai Stevenson by General Eisenhower for the presidency in 1952 gave intellectuals in general and politicised intellectuals in particular a feeling of rejection if not persecution. Writing in the midst of the Eisenhower period, C. Wright Mills did not consider intellectuals to be part of "the power élite",

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barely bothered to discuss them at all and then only to dismiss them contemptuously as "hired men."[15]

Towards the end of Eisenhower's administration, a survey of opinion of social science professors showed that most of them were convinced that the professoriat was not "much appreciated" by businessmen and congressmen.[16] In 1959, Professor Seymour Martin Lipset was impressed by the self-pity and the self-image of low status among intellectuals, neither of which he believed was justified by the evidence. Other indications supported a more optimistic view. By 1958, of the 14 US Senators who had taught in some college or university, nine might be classified as professors, a higher percentage than ever before. One writer claimed that the Eisenhower administration employed more professors than the New Deal had ever done. In 1959, one of the most astute observers, Professor David Riesman, held that the status of intellectuals was "good and getting better." And soon after the end of the Eisenhower years, the one authority on the American Establishment revealed that "the presidents and senior professors of the great Eastern universities frequently constitute themselves as *ad hoc* Establishment committees." Since he also confessed that the only thing we can apparently know about the Establishment is that it exists, it was not altogether clear just what importance should be attributed to these self-constituted committees. Still, even to be mentioned in such high and mighty company suggested that the status of some university presidents and senior professors had risen spectacularly despite all the pessimism and discontent of the Eisenhower period.[17]

AN ARTICLE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST, owing to the future career of its author, appeared in 1959. It was called "The Policymaker and the Intellectual" and was written by Henry A. Kissinger, at the time of publication a Lecturer in Government at Harvard and already knowledgeable from personal experience about the vicissitudes of intellectuals in politics.[18]

Kissinger thought that a case could be made even then that "in some respects the intellectual has never been more in demand" by policymakers. As much autobiographical as anything else, most of the article was a cry of pain at the way policymakers mishandled and misunderstood intellectuals. Kissinger's catalogue of woes was revelatory—

> "the intellectual is rarely found at the level where decisions are made. . . . It is the executive who determines in the first place whether he needs advice . . . he [the intellectual] is asked to solve problems, not to contribute to the definition of goals . . . in short, all too often what the policymaker wants from the intellectual is not ideas but endorsement."

The great problem for the intellectual, according to Kissinger, was to decide whether to participate in the political process as an intellectual or as an administrator. If he chose the role of intellectual, it was essential for him

> "to retain the freedom to deal with the policymaker from a position of independence, and to reserve the right to assess the policymaker's demands in terms of his own standards."

Kissinger in 1959 had already had a good deal of experience dealing with policymakers from a position of independence which, in practice, meant staying out of the administration and dispensing advice to those in both parties who asked for it. The Kissinger of 1959 still thought like an intellectual in politics; it took ten more years and the temptation of office to make him more like an intellectual politician. As one reads the 1959 article, one is not sure that the earlier Kissinger would have approved of the later Kissinger.

In any case, the cyclical theory as interpreted by Professor Arthur Schlesinger put the 1950s on the downward swing. It may well be, however, that the cyclical theory operated, but on a higher and higher plane. Thus the Eisenhower period was a letdown from the heady Roosevelt and Truman years but still represented an advance over pre-Roosevelt times. Another possibility is that intellectuals in politics do not count other intellectuals who have the wrong kind of politics.

Professor David Riesman proved to be right. It did not take long for the political status of intellectuals to get better, indeed, better than ever. When John F. Kennedy was elected President in 1960, he was not the intellectuals' first choice. Most of them preferred Adlai Stevenson and distrusted Kennedy. By winning over two of Stevenson's most important intellectual backers (Arthur Schlesinger and John Kenneth Galbraith), Kennedy turned the intellectual tide in his favour. They preferred to pick a winner, an urge not conspicuously characteristic of previous generations of liberal intellectuals. In fact, the Republican presidential candidate, Richard M. Nixon, tried to stigmatise the Democrats as "the

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[15] C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (1956), p. 351.
[16] Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Wagner Thielens, Jr., *The Academic Mind* (1958), p. 12.
[17] *Daedalus*, Summer 1959, p. 469. *New York Times*, 9 November, 1958. John Fischer, *Harper's*, March 1958, p. 18. *Daedalus*, p. 492. Richard H. Rovere, *The American Establishment and Other Reports, Opinions and Speculations* (1962), pp. 8–9.
[18] *The Reporter*, 5 March 1959, pp. 30–35.

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party of Galbraith and Schlesinger and Bowles" —not a bad score for the intellectuals, if only it had been more accurate. This line of attack showed that intellectuals were still functioning as political whipping boys. In Schlesinger's view, Kennedy himself was a latterday intellectual politician "as politicians go"—possibly fainter praise than was intended. Schlesinger also explained why the intellectuals had changed their attitude towards Kennedy from cold to hot —"their gradual recognition of his desire to bring the world of power and the world of ideas together in alliance."[19] A better diagnosis of the passion for politics by Kennedy's intellectuals would be hard to find; it suggests that the older faith in the power *of* ideas had given way to the newer preference for power *and* ideas. Kennedy's closest aide, Theodore C. Sorensen, claimed that Kennedy had appointed to important posts a higher proportion of academicians (including 16 Rhodes scholars) than any other President in history and even more than any European government had ever done. Sorenson also boasted that Kennedy's appointees had written more books than the President—a fast reader at twelve hundred words a minute—could read in a four-year term.[20] One dreads to think how long it would have taken a President like Eisenhower to read the same number of books.

THE WHITE HOUSE WAS NOT the only source of political advancement for intellectuals in the transition from the 1950s to the 1960s. A former Rhodes Scholar, Representative John Brademas of Indiana, has related how he was told to play down his Harvard-Oxford background when he first ran for office in 1954. Four years later, his local backers were urging citizens to "vote for Brademas because he has a fine education."[21] By the mid-1960s, almost a seventh of the members of the US Senate were former professors.[22] It may be said without exaggeration that professors, ex-professors, and would-be professors were all over Washington—in the White House, in the bureaucracy, in Congress and congressional staffs, in almost all levels of government.

THEN THE CYCLICAL THEORY began to work again. President Lyndon B. Johnson had inherited many of Kennedy's intellectuals, but they could never be as happy with Johnson as they had been with Kennedy, if only for stylistic reasons. It is hard to imagine Johnson concluding an informal talk with representatives of national organisations by reading to them Blanche of Castile's speech from *King John*, beginning with the words:

"The sun's o'ercast with blood; fair day, adieu! . . ."[23]

Johnson's intellectuals were enormously productive during his first two years of domestic reforms; the Viet Nam war destroyed him politically and isolated them morally. One historian of the period asserts that the defection of "liberals and intellectuals"—it is sometimes hard to tell them apart in the literature—finished off Johnson as a party leader and forced him to abdicate.[24] For once, a President needed intellectuals more than they needed him.

LYNDON JOHNSON LOST the intellectuals; Richard Nixon never had them. Nixon would have had trouble with intellectuals even if he had not been Nixon. He was a Republican, and intellectuals have been allergic to Republicans at least since the New Deal. Nixon even had trouble giving away jobs to well-known intellectuals. Those few who took them felt as isolated and embattled as if they had decided to sacrifice themselves in a lost but somehow necessary cause. Indeed, the best of Nixon's intellectuals accepted his call to duty because he was the President and had a right to summon them to serve the country, not because they were particularly fond of him. Professor Kissinger was notoriously dubious about Nixon's qualifications before proximity in the White House made him change his mind. After Nixon's disgrace, the intellectuals who had enjoyed his favour in better times felt that he had betrayed them—not that they had betrayed themselves. What disturbed them was Watergate, not Viet Nam. In a sense, intellectuals never had so little and yet so much power as under Nixon—so little because most of them did not want it from him and so much because they could now take it or leave it.

It is too soon to say much about President Carter's intellectuals, except that they are all over Washington again. By this time, intellectuals seem to have pre-empted some key governmental positions—Assistant for National Security Affairs, Science Adviser, and Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers among others. Academic economists have done especially well in the Carter administration. If we may trust that high authority, Professor Galbraith, a hard man to please, President Carter has appointed no

[19] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days* (1965), p. 109.
[20] Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (1965), p. 246.
[21] *The Intellectual in Politics* (ed. H. Malcolm Macdonald, 1966), pp. 103–104.
[22] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Crisis of Confidence* (1969), p. 79.
[23] Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, p. 725.
[24] William L. O'Neill, *Coming Apart: An Informal History of America in the 1960s* (1970), p. 146.

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fewer than four "professional economists of full academic qualifications" as Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Labor, and Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.[25] It may be surmised, however, that presidents have been turning to professional economists not merely for their academic qualifications but because they enable them to avoid appointing a businessman who might annoy labour or a labour official who might annoy business. The new Science Adviser, Professor Frank Press, recently declared that "Jimmy Carter doesn't have the fear of academics and intellectuals" that several previous Presidents are said to have had.[26] Presumably we will now find out whether intellectuals are better off when they are not feared.

BY NOW, THE SUB-SPECIES which Dr Ralf Dahrendorf, Director of the London School of Economics, recently called "the important group of those who 'straddle' academia and decision making" has been recognised internationally. The latest and most conspicuous straddler is Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski, Dr Kissinger's successor in the White House. The typical straddler is most frequently found in research institutes such as the Brookings Institution of Washington, D.C., whose members must sometimes be confused about whether they are coming from or going into the government. Straddlers have become so indispensable in the modern state that we may soon have, according to Dr Dahrendorf, a Social Science Research Council institute for policy research and a more modest "LSE Brookings" in Britain as well as a "European Brookings" and a "Third World Brookings."[27] Professor Brzezinski prepared for his present position by straddling in not one but two such organisations—his own Research Institute on International Change (originally Communist Affairs) at Columbia University and his brainchild, the "Trilateral Commission", in which he first attracted the attention of Governor Jimmy Carter and vice versa. Straddling has now been institutionalised to such an extent that it must be considered the highest form of life among intellectuals in politics.

SOME DEEP STRUCTURAL CHANGES must have taken place in American society to account for the change from the 19th century, when intellectuals were alienated from American politics and politicians from intellectuals, to the latter half of the 20th century, when a kind of symbiosis has taken place between intellectuals and politics. These changes are not uniquely American but they have probably gone further in the United States than anywhere else.

One of the deepest aspects of the change is the shift in perspective from the past to the present. The native habitat of scholars used to be the past; real scholars did not go beyond 1789 or, in extreme cases, the Renaissance or even the Middle Ages. A few such purists remain but they are a vanishing breed. The cult of the present has almost replaced the cult of the past. When intellectuals go into politics they go into the world of the present, the pragmatic, the manageable. As a result, fields such as economics, political science, and sociology, which are themselves concerned almost wholly with the present or recent past, make the most fertile breeding grounds for intellectuals in politics. Such intellectuals do not have to jump from the past to the present; they jump from the study of the present to the practice of the present—and then jump back to the study of their own practice. The university has become a preparatory school for government, and government has become the ultimate in post-professorial education. Professor Moynihan is an extreme case in point. He spent 13 of the 20 years between 1950 and 1970 in government. Reflecting on this background, he has confided that "as a teacher I find these experiences are the largest store of knowledge on which I have to draw. . . ."[28] Teachers have long taught politics; some now teach their own experiences in politics. It becomes virtually impossible to draw a line between intellectual work and political work.

THE FIELDS I HAVE MENTIONED are not the only ones which have made this temporal leap. They at least were always located mainly in the present. But what shall we say of the transformation that has taken place in anthropology? When I went to school it was still thought to be the study of primitive societies. Not long ago, however, I sat next to a young woman studying at a large American university. I politely inquired what she was doing. "Anthropology", she said. "And what kind of anthropology?" I asked. She replied she was doing a dissertation on one of the "new towns" that have sprung up in the United States —so new that it is still not quite finished. The anthropologists, having exhausted or having been expelled from the society of primitives, have invaded the society of the present, thus creating an awkward situation for the sociologists, who presumably should take revenge by

[25] *Esquire*, May 1977, p. 70.
[26] *New York Times*, 2 May 1977.
[27] *The Times* (letter), 4 August 1977.
[28] Daniel P. Moynihan, *The Politics of a Guaranteed Income* (1973), p. 13.

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moving from the present to the past. We are obviously in the presence of an intellectual transmutation that goes far beyond politics but is particularly conducive to participation in politics.

Sociologists know when they have a good thing and have no intention of giving up their stranglehold on the present. An American sociological journal recently asked a group of sociologists what they expected from the Carter administration. Some replies were euphoric. Congress, one experienced practitioner jubilated, "is increasingly dependent on the products of social science research." Some Congressional committee reports are stuffed with it. The executive branch increasingly finds that it can hardly get along without sociological research.

> "In learning to live with an all-volunteer army, for example, the army is calling on social scientists to study how to deal with race and sex. The Army Corps of Engineers is calling on social scientists to help it understand the impact of its projects on communities. The State Department needs sociological research not only for briefing foreign affairs officers, but also in administering Agency International Development programs. . . ."

Another sociologist lamented that the government was driving out "the amateur in the social science business" by supporting large-scale research institutions which

> "are geared to the major consumer—the government— . . . understand the cost guidelines . . . know how to do business in Washington."

He was, however, somewhat cynical about the outcome—"the bulk of academics will be used as window-dressing for the proposals that are written." Another professor thought that "the long latent lust for being close to power—or at least the trappings of power", which gripped academics and intellectuals during the Kennedy-Johnson years, and went underground with Nixon and Ford, was staging a comeback with Carter. He looked forward to the emergence of a new type of "born-again" social scientist, committed to political action with "open political values." A fourth foresaw the evanescence of "a good many of the former reservations about government funds and consultancies, expressed in academia with such fervour in the late 1960s and 1970s." Well-known scholars were worrying that the government would not lavish enough of its largesse on the academic community. "Gone, apparently, are all the qualms." Here, apparently, is a new generation of intellectuals awaiting its turn at the political trough.[29]

[29] Professors Jessie Bernard, George Sternlieb, Brady Tyson and William Glade, *Society*, May–June 1977, pp. 8–21.

THUS FAR I HAVE EMPHASISED the intellectual shift from the past to the present. Intellectuals who go into politics, however, make an even greater leap in time. After all, intellectuals almost always work for politicians—and politicians live *in* the present *for* the future. I am always astonished at the kind of questions that government officials and politicians ask. What they want are prophets, not historians. Politicians are always worried about policy—what to do to meet this-or-that problem or eventuality. They want to know what is going to happen if they take this action or adopt that strategy. Policy is the politician's game, and policy is future-oriented. Intellectuals cross an invisible line into politics whenever they get into policy. Yet it is at that point that they really begin to interest politicians, who may listen patiently to the background of a problem but wish desperately to get to the foreground.

As a result, intellectual trends and fashions have been following political needs and conditions. We now have, for example, an academic field known as "public policy" or "policy studies." In one branch of this field, a school of thought interprets the making of foreign policy largely in terms of "bargaining" between bureaucrats in the government hierarchy. Whatever we may think of this "Bureaucratic-Politics model," as it is called, it is clearly an intellectual child of the times. It reflects the preoccupation of intellectuals with policy, in part because intellectuals are increasingly called on to pronounce on policy, in part as a result of their increased experience with it.

Or consider the ups-and-downs of the field known as "Area Studies." It shot up in the 1950s when the United States was drawn in—or drew itself in—to virtually every area in the world often without preparation, personnel, or policy. For about a decade, no self-respecting university could get along without "area specialists"—South-east Asia, East Africa, West Africa, Middle East, Far East, Latin America, etc., or any portion thereof. By the end of the 1960s, area studies went into decline; many of its former practitioners have turned to more promising fields. One reason for the popularity of area studies had been the availability of funds from the government or wealthy foundations; as soon as these lost interest, the programmes shrivelled. Another reason for their decline was the growing reluctance of many areas, especially in Africa, to let Americans, particularly anthropologists, roam freely in villages, asking all sorts of suspicious or outlandish questions—from the point of view of the natives. The rise and decline of Area Studies was at least as much politically as intellectually motivated.

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The same intellectual cycle of rise and decline has characterised Russian studies, Chinese studies, Latin American studies, and guerrilla-warfare studies—to name but a few. Government policy has not always been the main reason for such fluctuations. In the case of Russian studies, the New Left wave at the end of the 1960s was partially responsible for their decline by spreading the word that the Soviet Union had become conservative, unfashionable, boring. These academic trends behave like the stock market; their intellectual stocks go up and down depending on the public's interest and investment in them.

Other structural changes in society have also changed the role of intellectuals in government. In the past half century or so, three great proliferations have taken place, so familiar that I need only mention them—the proliferation of government, of the so-called knowledge industries, and of colleges and universities. Each of these proliferations produced a demand for more and more trained personnel, at least some of whom may be classified as intellectuals. By now the American government has become so pervasive that even the Carter administration, which came in committed to cutting it back, seems to be giving up in despair. The three proliferations add up to a new or at least a very different social order, for which no one has yet been able to come up with a good name. The most popular name—"the Post-Industrial society"—tells us what it followed, not what it is. A crisis in the social order brought American intellectuals into politics; a change in the social order has kept them there in larger and larger numbers.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE intellectuals in American politics?

The short answer is, I think, that they are generally as important as politicians want them to be. Intellectuals may have influence but they almost never have power. President Truman is supposed to have said: "I think intellectuals in government are great as long as there's an old pro to tell them what to do." Intellectuals may find this Trumanesque candour offensive or demeaning, but it comes out of long, hard experience and cannot be easily rejected. Politics demands 60–40 decisions, even 55–45, and in extreme cases 51–49. Politicians who cannot make such decisions do not get to or stay at the top. For intellectuals, such decisions may be agonising, often impossible. If the odds are so close, it is intellectually better to reserve judgment, wait for more evidence, report results without prejudice. Thus it has become the accepted function of intellectuals in government to present the available options as fairly and fully as possible, but to let the "old pro" decide on which option to adopt. The way options are presented may influence the decision. Still, presenting is not the same thing as deciding, and responsibility goes to the political decision-maker, not the intellectual option-merchant.

On the other hand, intellectuals are not likely to do much good until they lose their awe for the "old pro."

The experience of Professor Schlesinger in the case of the ill-fated Bay of Pigs expedition in 1960 should be a warning to all intellectuals new to government. Arthur Schlesinger was officially designated a Special Assistant to President Kennedy without specific duties; he thought of himself as a "historian-participant", itself a new intellectual-political role. As a newcomer to the government, he was given the assignment of writing a White Paper to justify the attempt to overthrow Castro. It was a pretty good paper, but it had little relation to the political realities behind the enterprise: Schlesinger himself thought that the project was ill-conceived and privately expressed his opposition to President Kennedy. In the critical discussions at which the heads of the CIA, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Departments of State and Defense were present, Schlesinger said little. Later he explained why:

> "It is one thing for a Special Assistant to talk frankly in private to a President at his request and another for a college professor, fresh to government, to interpose his unassisted judgment in open meeting against that of such august figures as the Secretaries of State and Defence and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, each speaking with the full weight of his institution behind him."

The fiasco changed all that. "The Bay of Pigs gave us license for the impolite inquiry and the rude comment", Schlesinger recalled, no doubt with grim satisfaction.[30] That was probably the last time he was overawed by anyone.

One of the things an "old pro" tells intellectuals to do is to write speeches for him. Professor Raymond Moley, the original Brain Truster, will probably be remembered most for inserting three words, "the Forgotten Man", in a campaign speech for Franklin D. Roosevelt in April 1932. The phrase was not original with him; it had first been used in a different context by the sociologist, William Graham Sumner; presumably, however, it took an intellectual to remember the words in the first place. But would they have reverberated in the same way if Moley, the intellectual, not Roosevelt the politician, had spoken them in his own name?

Then there is Professor Galbraith who wrote a

[30] Arthur Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, pp. 249–55, 297.

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draft for the inaugural address of President Kennedy in January 1961. Kennedy seems to have used little more than one sentence. Galbraith later commented ruefully on the fate of his draft:

> "A ghost-writer is like an unloved dog in a poor family. He must be content with scraps."[31]

More than one intellectual has felt like an unloved dog in a politician's extended family. Still, intellectuals must get a great deal of satisfaction from ghost-writing—they do so much of it. It may well be the ultimate expression of the intellectual's role in politics—words, not actions; ideas without responsibility.

Intellectuals as idea men and as talent scouts —their two other favourite occupations—obey the same rules of the game.

INTELLECTUALS propose; politicians dispose. To be successful, the intellectual must often propose just what the politician wants him to propose. "I've been an adviser of the President", Professor Paul A. Samuelson, the eminent economist, recently confessed:

> "You sometimes have the impression that you call the shots, but as you think about it you realise that you are selected because your brand of moonshine, of snake oil, sits well on the scalp or in the stomach of the President."[32]

To say that intellectuals have become important is largely to say that they have become important to politicians. To gain real power, the intellectual must become a politician. The only independent source of power in the American system comes from having a constituency, and most intellectuals have a constituency of one—themselves. Thus Senator Moynihan, after having suffered repeated frustrations in appointive offices, sought and won an elective office. His case suggests how really powerless—if real power is understood to be the power of decision—an appointed intellectual can be and what he can do about it. One sociologist was so elated by Dr Moynihan's election to the Senate that he celebrated it as the beginning of "a new era of seeking and winning office" by social scientists. In this latest of new eras for the intellectual in politics, "if social scientists want to, they may begin appointing the lawyers—a long overdue switch in roles."[33] One might almost imagine that the real struggle for power was between intellectuals and lawyers.

PROFESSOR-AMBASSADOR-SENATOR MOYNIHAN is one of our two most celebrated intellectuals in politics. His career merits a little closer examination because he illustrates a number of different types of the species. For years he went in and out of university and government; in this phase, he was what may be called an "in-and-outer", which is what most intellectuals in government are. In this capacity, he set something of a record by impartially serving Presidents as different as Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon in succession. Professional politicians must envy his survival rate; no politician has ever given a better exhibition of how to survive the downfall of at least two presidential patrons and come out on top on his own. As Senator, Pat Moynihan is presumably in politics to stay, though one cannot be sure of anything in his case—he recently referred to himself, perhaps jokingly, as a "displaced professor." In effect, he illustrates two paths of the intellectual—from in-and-outer to stay-in, and from the appointive to the elective.

The question arises whether Senator Moynihan is still an intellectual in politics. This question was implicitly raised by Mr James Reston, who holds the Chair of Political Commentary endowed by the *New York Times*. Mr Reston recently remarked that Dr Moynihan had markedly changed since he was elected to the United States Senate. Before putting on his senatorial toga (according to Reston) Moynihan "saw the world as a whole and was almost recklessly honest in defining America's widest possible interests." Now, as Senator from New York, Moynihan has been advocating a limitation on foreign imports on behalf of the hard-pressed garment industry in New York. As a result, Reston concluded sorrowfully, Moynihan is fighting for the interests of his particular rag-trade constituents and "defending their local, personal and political concerns", as he apparently would not have done in the old days when he could still afford to see the world as a whole and be almost recklessly honest.[34] Now (if we believe Mr Reston) Senator Moynihan has to see the world through the eyes of his constituents and be as honest as their interests will permit. Thus Moynihan illustrates the distinction between an intellectual in politics and an intellectual politician.

SENATOR MOYNIHAN figured in another recent incident which tells much about the difference between a pure-and-simple intellectual, an appointed intellectual, and an elected intellectual. The story is worth relating in some detail because it concerns two intellectuals in politics in the same field but cast in different roles.

Dr Moynihan went to work for President Nixon in 1969 as Assistant for Urban Affairs. His job entailed responsibility for drawing up a

[31] John Kenneth Galbraith, *Ambassador's Journal* (1969), p. 16.
[32] Interview in *Challenge*, March–April 1977, p. 31.
[33] Irving Louis Horowitz, *Society*, May–June 1977, p. 22.
[34] *New York Times*, 16 April 1977.

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plan for the reform of the welfare system. It took almost seven months for the Nixon administration to present Congress with a project, known as the "Family Assistance Plan", which provided for a guaranteed annual income. The plan was shot down in the United States Senate, and Dr Moynihan published a book in 1973 (*The Politics of a Guaranteed Income*) about the politics which had killed it. In that same year, Professor Henry J. Aaron put out a staff paper entitled *Why is Welfare So Hard to Reform?* for the Brookings Institution. Moynihan's book might have had the same title.

During the 1976 presidential campaign, Dr Moynihan as a member of the Democratic platform committee was instrumental in writing into the platform a commitment for an "income maintenance system", another form of his old guaranteed-annual-income plan. The newly elected Senator Moynihan also succeeded in getting a seat on the important Senate Finance Committee and in heading its Subcommittee on Public Assistance to consider the promised Carter reform of the welfare system. Meanwhile, Professor Aaron was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) in charge of welfare. Thus the two authors of 1973 found themselves in different political positions in 1977.

On 25 April of this year, Senator Moynihan learned that the administration bill would not be ready by 1 May as he had expected and that only a statement of principles would be forthcoming by that date. The delay was sorely disappointing. It meant that his subcommittee would not be able to hold early hearings on the bill as he had planned. The urgency of such hearings was not apparent inasmuch as the Majority Leader, Senator Robert Byrd, had already put off welfare reform in favour of energy legislation for at least that session of Congress. In any case, Senator Moynihan blew up at the news of the administration's delay. In his wrath, he told reporters that "you can draft that bill in the morning"—the sort of bill which had taken him almost seven months to draft for President Nixon without getting Congress to approve it and which the Carter administration was expected to draft in only four months.

The chief culprit, according to Senator Moynihan, was Assistant Secretary of HEW Aaron. Referring to Professor Aaron's staff paper of 1973, Senator Moynihan exploded:

> "This is *HEW* at it again. They produce wonderful books telling you why you can't do things."

Senator Moynihan seemed to have forgotten that Professor Moynihan had also produced a wonderful book in 1973 telling why he couldn't do the same things.

After Senator Moynihan's public denunciation, Assistant Secretary Aaron was clearly in trouble. So Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Eileen Shanahan came to Assistant Secretary Aaron's assistance by announcing that the staff paper of 1973 no longer reflected the latter's views.

This cautionary tale shows how dangerous it is for intellectuals to write books before becoming government officials. But if they did not write books, how would they become intellectuals? There is no easy way out of this dilemma. We have here two former professors who, as intellectuals, were not so very far apart. As Senator and Assistant Secretary, however, they moved into positions of antagonism. The Senator forgot how embarrassing the written word had more than once been for him. The Assistant Secretary decided—or had it decided for him—that it was better to repudiate his book than endanger his job.

Three months later, the Carter administration finally produced its new welfare programme. Senator Moynihan immediately called it "magnificent, superbly crafted", without waiting for any hearings on the proposed bill by his subcommittee.[35]

Senators, then, have political "muscle" and "clout." Assistant Secretaries do not. Senator Moynihan had himself been an Assistant Secretary not so long ago. It is interesting to speculate what would have happened if the roles had been reversed—if Senator Aaron had denounced Assistant Secretary Moynihan. Probably they would have acted out their respective roles in much the same way; the rules of the game put an Assistant Secretary at a disadvantage in confrontation with a Senator, especially the head of just the subcommittee that must pass on the Assistant Secretary's handiwork.

THAT LESS POLYMORPHOUS BUT even more celebrated intellectual in politics, Henry A. Kissinger, suggests another side of the phenomenon. The species is apt to suffer from a rare form of psychological conflict. As Secretary of State, Dr Kissinger lived with an acute case of this subtle affliction. In an interview with James Reston, Dr Kissinger said that he thought of himself as a historian more than as a statesman. For our present purposes, we may interpret this to mean that he thought of himself as an intellectual more than as a politician. As a historian, Secretary Kissinger explained, one had to be a pessimist or, to use his exact words, "one has to live with a sense of the inevitability of tragedy...."

[35] This story can be followed in the *Washington Post*, 26 and 27 April, 8 August 1977, and the *New York Times*, 26 April.

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But as a statesman, he said, one had to be optimistic or, again in his own words, "one has to act on the assumption that problems must be solved. . . ."[36] Who was the real Kissinger, the pessimistic historian-intellectual or the optimistic statesman-politician? One suspects that the real Kissinger thought of himself as an intellectual pessimist but felt that he had to pretend to be a statesmanlike optimist. In any case, Kissinger could not lose. If he succeeded, the statesman-politician was right; if he failed, the historian-intellectual was right.

Nor was this the only evidence of an unresolved conflict in Kissinger's intellectual makeup. On the one hand, he was forever calling for "concepts" in the formation of foreign policy. On the other hand, he insistently maintained that "nuances" were what really counted. He never explained how concepts can be crucial if nuances are all-important.

It may be objected that Dr Kissinger was an exception to the rule that appointed officials lack real power of decision. If he was an exception, however, no great generalities can be drawn from him. It is not yet possible to be sure just how exceptional he was throughout the eight years that he served under Presidents Nixon and Ford. We are most likely going to find out that he did what Nixon wanted him to do, and he did not do what Nixon did not want him to do, until the Watergate crisis of 1973. He became more and more independent of the presidency as the President came closer and closer to self-destruction. Kissinger was the product and beneficiary of an afflicted system. Yet he somehow contrived to be in and out of it at the same time. The sicker the system became, the more indispensable he appeared to be. He was its symptom far more than its cure.

In any case, it will take some time to disentangle Kissinger's publicity from his power. Favoured writers paid him back to the point of inanity. For example, one virulently anti-Israel book on the Arab-Israeli conflict (based in large part on some 25 interviews with Kissinger and two of his closest aides as well as on secret documents secretly leaked) told readers that "Kissinger was in real measure running the world" during the Yom Kippur war in October 1973.[37] The *whole* world? Brezhnev's Russia? Mao's China? Castro's Cuba? Even Indira's India? Still, one can only regard with awe an intellectual who was voted "the greatest person in the world today" by the Miss Universe contestants in 1974.[38]

I am inclined to think that Kissinger's power over the American media was greater than his power over anything else. I doubt whether future historians will agree with a court biography which was written with his help and which flattered him in these terms: "He is a professor who had been given the unique opportunity to put his theories into practice and to shape history."[39] The pre-Nixonian Kissinger had anti-*détente* theories but did not put them into practice; the Nixonian Kissinger improvised one theory of *détente* after another to suit his practice; the post-Nixonian Kissinger warned in effect that *détente* in theory was Soviet expansionism in practice, as demonstrated by the Soviet-Cuban intervention in Angola. How much history was actually shaped by Kissinger has become more and more dubious as less and less of his handiwork remains. It looks as if the further we get away from Kissinger's accomplishments, the more insubstantial and ephemeral they appear to be. The more illusions a statesman inspires about himself, the more disillusionment he invites from future historians. The latter may even have trouble figuring out what all the excitement was about or what Kissinger did to earn it. As a shaper of history, Kissinger was most successful in shaping his own histrionics, not history.

Yet Kissinger's self-aggrandisement paid off in a little noted way. In the transition from the Nixon to the Ford presidency, Kissinger emerged as the critical element of continuity and stability. That President Ford should have had to announce without delay that he was keeping Kissinger in office testified to the independent role that Kissinger had achieved. Unfortunately, this feat was predicated on the degeneration and disintegration of the political régime of which he had been an integral part and to which he had lent some respectability. How he managed to save his political skin was a tribute to the political, not the intellectual, side of his personality. Whatever the reason or the means, he was thereby able to help the country though a dangerous moment. It may well come to be regarded as the time when he did the least and gave the most.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD for intellectuals in politics? The high point for the species was probably reached during the Kennedy years and for an individual by Henry Kissinger during the Nixon years. The intellectual component in the Carter administration is still large enough to indicate that there has been no great change for the worse. The ubiquity and complexity of the modern state assure a continuing

[36] *New York Times*, 13 October 1974.
[37] Edward R. F. Sheehan, *The Arabs, Israelis, and Kissinger* (1976), p. 38.
[38] Leslie H. Gelb, *New York Times Magazine*, 31 October 1976, p. 79.
[39] Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger* (1974), p. 544.

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need for intellectuals—fully licensed, semi-, quasi- and pseudo-.

But American intellectuals themselves have changed. When they first invaded the government in large numbers, they were filled with self-confidence. The economists forged into the lead, setting an example of worldly success and mathematical precision. Much that happened in the other social "sciences" was imitative of or at least inspired by them. By 1973, the economists again led the way—in retreat. That year the new President of the American Economic Association, Professor Walter Heller, former Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, spoke for the profession when he said:

> "Economists are distinctly in a period of re-examination. The energy crisis caught us with our parameters down. The food crisis caught us too. This was a year of infamy in inflation forecasting. There are many things we really don't know."

Such uncertainty still characterises the intellectual mood, and not only of economists. One of our best sociological minds, Professor Daniel Bell, has recently put into words what is common knowledge—"the social-science knowledge to design a proper health system, or a housing environment, or a good educational curriculum, is inadequate."[40] If intellectuals cannot cope with these tasks, they are in much greater trouble than at any time since the great breakthrough almost half-a-century ago. The quantity of intellectuals in politics may not change much, but the quality of their work is being downgraded by the intellectuals themselves.

If the intellectuals do not watch out, they may bear out the low opinion of experts expressed exactly one hundred years ago by Lord Salisbury, who knew something of politics:

> "No lesson seems to be so deeply inculcated by the experience of life as that you should never trust in experts. If you believe the doctors nothing is wholesome; if you believe the theologians nothing is innocent; if you believe the soldiers nothing is safe."

He might have gone on to say: if you believe the intellectuals, nothing is right.

The difficulty is that there is no good substitute for "experts" and "intellectuals." If they are not to be trusted, who should be? They may not be trusted as much as before, but society and government are likely to be just as dependent on them in the foreseeable future. The reason is that the intellectuals are but the most articulate, self-conscious repositories of the accumulated learning and experience of a society. If the intellectuals are in trouble, they are not the only ones; the society is in trouble.

[40] "The Future World Disorder: The Structural Context of Crisis", in *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1977, p. 120.

Cat-man to His Dog

What's appealing, and also boring, about dogs
Is that they're natural party members:
Faithful, true, but amoral in their loyalty
And readiness to savage the opposition.

They're born card-carriers, whether Fascist
(Like Hitler's alsatians) or Marxo-Fascist
Or just plain Tail-Wagger, their nature calls
For a membership symbol on their collar.

Properly trained, they will happily attack
On command, and are only obeying orders
When they salivate round frontier guards
Who set them on to cowering refugees.

My dog, you look wistfully over your paws:
Are you regretting a collective cause,
The fact that I belong to a party of one
And that you're missing some dirty fun?

Matthew Mitchell

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Revolutionaries

Their Mind, Body, and Soul—By FERDINAND MOUNT

THERE MUST be *something* that makes a revolutionary, something in the air, the water, the genes, the system. What dangerous magic, what sinister magnetic force is it that draws people, young people of whom so much is expected, away from the comfortable certainties of home? Did we not shudder when we ourselves were young, at the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin? What was the Piper's secret? The curiosity is romantic, even prurient, but it has also a practical aim. If only we knew the secret, it might lose its magic power over us or over our children.

Once we wanted to know what made Saints tick. We were hungry for the minutest details of their childhoods, their conversions, their miracles. Could we, should we encourage sons and daughters to follow what they claimed was their vocation? How were we to know whether the vocation was genuine? Then curiosity switched to the new threat to conventional life, the Bohemian. Artists and whores became heroic object lessons, daring and disastrous adventurers to be envied, imitated, shunned or deterred.

Now Revolutionaries. You have only to glance at, say, Andrew Sinclair's little life of Guevara or Régis Debray's *Revolution in the Revolution* to see how completely the old apparatus of hagiography, scholasticism and romance has been converted to new ends. More recently still, we have the "psychohistory" of the Revolutionary. For example, Bruce Mazlish's *The Revolutionary Ascetic.*[1]

The thesis of Mazlish's book is that while it takes all sorts to make a revolution, puritanical or ascetic tendencies are remarkably common among successful revolutionaries and that in both the theory and practice of modern revolution there has gradually emerged a characteristic type whose sole calling is revolution and who has little interest in anything else. This professional revolutionary is in effect married to his cause. His detachment from other worldly concerns, his indifference to sentiment, his hostility to all established religion and morality make him a formidable opponent. The development of this type of personality is a consequence of the secularising of asceticism. Mazlish combines Max Weber and Sigmund Freud to produce a historical explanation of the psychic formation of these remarkable people who are as hard on themselves as they are hard on others. Once such tough-minded idealists were Monks, then they were Capitalists, now they are Revolutionaries. From St Bernard to Dick Whittington to Lenin in three easy stages.

WHAT EXACTLY IS the drift of this argument? To keep track of our course it is as well to note the concessionary asides that Mazlish throws out from time to time. Not all revolutionary leaders are ascetic types. They certainly are not: Allende, Sukarno, Mussolini, Castro. Not all political ascetics are revolutionaries; Mazlish himself instances De Gaulle and Nixon. Nor do the Robespierres always win out over the Dantons. And where they do, is it not the case that, in Danton's words to Robespierre, "you can't conspire and fuck at the same time"? Mazlish quotes this illuminating remark, but does not develop the important point that revolutionary activity is so extremely time-consuming, frustrating, and tedious that only a somewhat ascetic personality is likely to possess enough stamina to carry on long enough to win power. Nothing that Mazlish instances in his potted biographies of celebrated revolutionaries strikes me as particularly revealing or specific. For example: a young man, brought up in a small country town, in a well-to-do local business family . . . interested in sports, not markedly intellectual . . . much influenced by his strong-willed mother, himself struggling against a powerful and often turbulent will . . . married young . . . deeply religious and with an overwhelming sense of sin which culminates in a nervous crisis in adult life leading to religious rebirth. . . . This could be a description of President Carter—or, no doubt, of many other people. In fact, it is how Mazlish describes his

[1] *The Revolutionary Ascetic: Evolution of a Political Type.* By BRUCE MAZLISH. Basic Books, $11.95, £8.95.

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first Puritan revolutionary, Oliver Cromwell. What precisely do we gain from such "psycho-sketches" collated from a few biographies and roughly matched up against the standard psychological types?

The value of such exercises is even more dubious when the raw material is provided by the subject himself. Mazlish's main authority for the early life of Mao Tse-tung is the interview Mao himself gave in middle age to Edgar Snow. Is there not, to put it mildly, a possibility that Mao might have used the interview for the purposes of propaganda? Politicians find it hard enough to tell the truth about anything; they find it almost impossible to remember the truth about their own past. Moreover, was Mao *very* ascetic? A chain-smoker, married three times, the third time to a notorious actress, does not immediately strike one as a refrainer from the pleasures of the senses on the scale of, say, Field-Marshal Montgomery. In many ways, Mao's last days resemble the old age of a typical English Duke – estranged from his third wife (a former Gaiety Girl), spending his millions now not on champagne and race-horses but on the equally powerful narcotics of flattery and solitude, continuing undaunted on his life's abiding obsession—the upkeep of his estate which is after all the source of his power. His Grace is moved now and then to contemplate the softness of modern youth and to recall modestly, and only if pressed, the hardships of the Burma Road. Not a licentious way of life, but not exactly ascetic.

IT IS NOT SO MUCH that Freudian ventures of this sort are irrelevant or even misleading in discussing the formation of a dictator's character, it is that they answer a question which hardly needs asking: namely, why do some people struggle to achieve power over others? The pleasures of exercising power are so obvious and so revelled in by so many different types of personality that to talk of asceticism in this context is like expressing wonder at the heroic self-control of a non-smoker in a brothel. If you wish to become President of the United States, you will of course need to desire power much more than the rest of us desire it. That intensity of desire may leave you with less time and energy to gratify other kinds of desire – or, if you are President Kennedy, Lloyd George, or Benito Mussolini, it may not.

What remains interesting in these ventures is not the shaky banality of their conclusions, but the powerful motives that lead men like Mazlish, Freud, and Erik Erikson to undertake them. "Psychohistory" like astrology is an alluring field because it purports to give effortless general explanations of human behaviour. It liberates the observer from history's awkward and gruelling insistence on the specific and the particular. Psychohistory is not, as its proponents claim, a new kind of searchlight which illuminates areas which traditional methods could not reach; it is essentially hostile to history (as indeed are many historians). The psychohistorian is quite undeterred by ignorance or by plain refutation. Consider this example of the Mazlish method:

> It was part of Lenin's genius that to master the "frightful irritation and rage" he learned to exercise massive self-control. We know from Freudian psychoanalysis that it is in the anal stage, when toilet training can become an issue, that the first struggles over "control" generally appear. In Eriksonian terms, the issue is joined between "autonomy and shame", and the child, just entering upon sphincter control, seeks to avoid parental control and regulation from without. Generally, he experiences "rage" at the effort by others to control what is so intimately "inside" him. Later, by introjection, he may take into himself compulsively the parental injunctions concerning cleanliness, regularity, and discipline. Unfortunately, we have no information on this stage of Lenin's early life, aside from the reference to his Spartan upbringing by his mother; we can only postulate it as an important formative time for his personality. Clearly, however, reached by one etiological means or another, Lenin in adult-hood was given to rage, which he mastered by self-control, attempted control of his environment, and compulsive orderliness and discipline.

We don't know anything about Lenin's toilet training—but if he was sternly controlled, that would account for his rages. And if he wasn't, then that would account for his rages too. Rousseau lost his parents early—so did Robes-pierre—that proves all sorts of things. But Lenin's family seemed happy and united—ah, but only *seemed*. According to the Mazlish theory, the revolutionary rank-and-file shower "boundless love" on their ascetic leader because he in turn loves nobody but the Revolution. Yet many of Lenin's closest colleagues seem to have been personally indifferent to him; some found him positively unpleasant. Mazlish discusses this little problem with devastating nonchalance:

> Provisionally, we must be willing to qualify the ideal type of "boundless love" by the existence in actuality of ambivalent feelings.

What runs through all these speculations is a constant longing to rise above the level of evidence, with all its gaps and irregularities, and move at ease in a world of ideal types in which the question "What makes a revolutionary?" has a scope which cannot be contested and an answer which cannot be refuted. Mazlish's absurdities are usually obvious enough, but the same distaste for history is often to be glimpsed in works which look more solidly grounded.

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IS REVOLUTION OR REVOLT really a concept which is solid enough and distinct enough to bear such a weight of theory? Do the American, French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions have enough in common to fence off a field of revolutionary studies? What kind of illumination are we to expect from studies such as J. Bowyer Bell's *On Revolt*[2]*:* or Jean Baechler's *Revolution.*[3] Baechler's title is a flashy mistranslation of *Les Phénomènes révolutionnaires* (see John Dunn's review in the *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 11 June 1976). Yet even in the more cautious original there resides an unspoken assumption that revolution and revolutionaries constitute a separable field.

Baechler writes in a lofty style, at once dismissive and self-deprecating. He lists, hurriedly in the manner of a tourist with a plane to catch, almost every factor that might be considered relevant to the study of political upheaval. I cannot improve on his own summing up:

> Because the content of a protracted revolution is a sum of events, each revolution is unique and incomparable, or at any rate the comparisons one might make, and which Crane Brinton has in fact made, lead to an abstract canvas that, in its atmosphere of utter boredom, contrasts sharply with the fascination exerted by a concrete revolution. It is rather as if one were trying to arrive at the features common to all Wimbledon finals; the result would be either a set of abstract rules of tennis or a collection of meaningless graphs, and all the events that make Wimbledon so attractive would be missed.

By contrast, Bell's more limited study of several revolts against the British crown—Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus, *etc.*—is of some value, although written in the euphuistic style of a tin-hatted war reporter of the old school and occasionally marred by a poor grasp of domestic British politics. Yet here too there is an effort to impose a more grandiose framework. Bell talks of a "lethal dialogue" between Rebels and Régime—a journalistic analogue to Baechler's academic "staseology." Both Baechler and Bell admit that the general conclusions to be drawn, if any, are extremely modest, but neither seems to understand that this was virtually inevitable from the start, because the factors governing both the strength of Régimes and the strength of the Rebels challenging them are infinitely numerous. All that can usefully be done is to give a summary of the historical evidence, as Walter Laqueur does in his altogether more distinguished *Guerrilla,*[4] and to conclude:

> . . . nineteenth-century guerrilla wars invariably failed to achieve their objectives except with the support of a regular army, domestic or foreign. During the Second World War guerrilla movements had limited successes against overextended enemy units; but they used the war to consolidate their power and in the political vacuum after the war they emerged as the chief contenders for power (China, Yugoslavia, Albania, Viet Nam).
>
> A powerful impetus was given to guerrilla war after 1945 with the disintegration of colonial empires. The colonial powers no longer had the will to fight, and even if guerrilla operations were militarily quite ineffective, to combat them became so costly that the imperial power eventually withdrew its forces.

Or to put it in general terms: "Guerrilla war is decisive only when the anti-guerrilla side is prevented for military or political reasons from committing its full resources to the struggle."

There is not much more to be said.

REVOLUTIONARIES, OF COURSE, would like to say a lot more. They wish to convince both themselves and the outside world that they are engaged on a vast and inevitably fruitful enterprise whose success is hidden in the womb of history and that their every action stems from an historical necessity whose place within the scheme of things they alone are competent to discover and expound. They like to feel that they alone matter and that however small and obscure they may appear to the unseeing eye, they constitute the new reality, the seed of the future. So energetically and determinedly do they proclaim their own importance that all too often even the non-revolutionary finds himself using their frame of reference while fiercely disputing their conclusions.

The constant temptation of thinking or writing about Revolution is to shut out the surrounding historical and political world which has formed the revolutionaries, which directs their programmes and tactics and which decides their success or failure. In all Mazlish's assortment of facts from Great Biographies, the most striking detail is Mao's statement that when he first got his job as an assistant librarian in Peking he was ignored because he spoke southern dialect. Mazlish finds it curious that Mao, the future nationalist, should start out as a separatist of sorts. But he passes on, only briefly noting the resemblance between Mao's early activity and "Adolf Hitler's separatist putsch in Bavaria; he, too, became a rabid 'nationalist'." In fact it is doubtful whether Hitler ever ceased to be a nationalist; most of the time he violently abused the Bavarian separatists. Munich was for Hitler not a capital but a base for a march on Berlin: it was *die Haupstadt der Bewegung*, the capital of the movement.

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[2] *On Revolt: Strategies of National Liberation.* By J. BOWYER BELL. Harvard University Press, $13.50, £9.30.

[3] *Revolution.* By JEAN BAECHLER. Blackwell, £5.50.

[4] *Guerrilla.* By WALTER LAQUEUR. Weidenfeld, £8.95; Little Brown, $17.50.

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WHAT HITLER DID HAVE in common with Mao was that he was born on the fringe of a great culture. And this is the most remarkable of all resemblances between revolutionary leaders.

They were almost all "borderline cases" in one sense or another: Hitler from the Austrian border; Mao from Hunan; Stalin from Georgia; Napoleon from Corsica; Trotsky from the Ukraine; Lenin from Tatar territory at the far rim of European civilisation; even Robespierre from Arras which had been captured by the French only a century before his birth and still had a strong Flemish tinge. And what is even more remarkable is how very early in their lives most of these provincials showed contempt for separatism or even local patriotism, often extending in later life (as with Stalin), to a marked brutality towards their own people. This rejection of provincial origin cannot be dismissed simply as a necessary consequence of ambition; after all, non-revolutionary political leaders with high ambitions often play up their provincial origins—e.g., Lloyd George or Jimmy Carter. For a revolutionary leader, on the other hand, provincial origins seem to be not so much a cause for pride and a stimulus to conquer as a kind of injury which demands concealment and vengeance. Whatever the significance, these well-known (essentially political and historical) data form a pattern far more striking than any constellation of family relationships or personal experiences in the lives of great revolutionaries.

CLOSELY LINKED TO the irremediable facts of birthplace are the equally undeniable facts of ancestry. Two, perhaps three, of Lenin's grandparents belonged to national minorities which were to be persecuted by Stalin. One grandmother was a Kalmyk, the other a Volga German; his maternal grandfather, Dr Alexander Blank, may have been of Jewish origin. Only his paternal grandfather was a Russian, a former serf.

Lenin, then, was born on the geographical fringe to parents who were themselves uneasy dwellers on the fringe of Russian civilisation. The creation of Lenin out of Ulyanov may well be in part at least a function of the age-old disproportion between the brutal might of Great Russia and the ring of smaller satellites with their endless tactical oscillation between submissive imitation and desperate rebellion. Behind Lenin's dark and inconsistent attitude towards the question of "national minorities" may be glimpsed something that goes far deeper and further back into history than the painfully "German" squabbles about Marxist doctrine. We glimpse feelings of resentment, envy, split loyalties—that fanatical, yet somehow awkward submersion in the master culture which tends to betray a marginal man, an outsider, a provincial—these terms are warped with use and abuse. Let us call him a borderer.

BORDERERS predominate in all sorts of revolutionary organisations. The British Communist Party, for example, seems to have been dominated by Scotsmen and, to a lesser extent, by Jews. The non-revolutionary British Labour Party by contrast seems much less border-dominated (except on the Far Left) although its supreme electoral strengths have always been in the Celtic fringes. Again, the leaders of British trade unions have on the whole been drawn fairly evenly from all creeds and parts of the country. Poverty and oppression do not seem to be enough to create a great revolutionary: a certain marginality, a feeling of exclusion or detachment from the dominant culture, is also necessary.

In his absorbing *Revolutionary Jews from Marx to Trotsky*,[5] Robert S. Wistrich cautiously opts for self-hatred as the motive which pushed so many recently emancipated Jews of talent and energy towards the barricades. And yet his own subtle biographical studies, in particular of such ambivalent, mutable characters as Bernard Lazare and Julius Martov, indicate that this is too simple an explanation. Plenty of Jews, after all, quite obviously did not hate themselves or their culture: Benjamin Disraeli and Léon Blum, for example. True, others felt themselves tarnished by the stereotype of the money-grubbing Jew which anti-Semitism had created; and they reacted by striving to dissolve their Jewishness in a universalist socialism. But others again reacted to emancipation in the opposite direction and threw their energies into Zionist movements that set out to create a vigorous and self-reliant Jewishness which the world would admire. Dr Wistrich's sympathies are clearly with the latter class. The thrust of his argument, though it is never pressed too hard, is that those who believed in assimilation, by whatever means, were wrong and proved to be wrong by the Holocaust. From this distance in time and experience one must hesitate to argue about so unique and terrible a chain of events; but it is surely dubious whether fewer Jews would have been murdered if they had asserted their collective identity more strongly than they did or, for that matter, if they had not asserted it at all. Unless almost the entire Jewish population had migrated out of harm's way in time—an unrealistic might-have-been—would Hitler, or

[5] *Revolutionary Jews from Marx to Trotsky*. By ROBERT S. WISTRICH. Harrap, £6.75.

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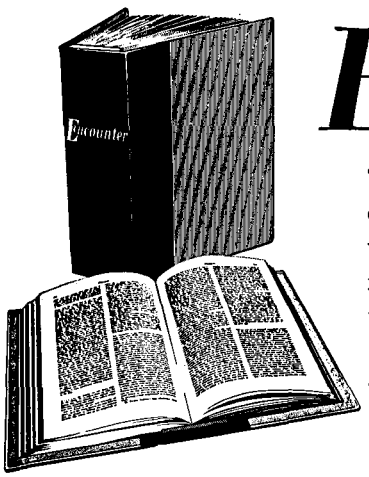
indeed the Czar, have behaved significantly differently? There is a limit to the responsibility that can be assigned to victims; and there are situations in which people, for all practical purposes, are helpless and to speculate what they might have done is in some measure to undervalue the fact of their helplessness.

I MENTION THIS POINT only to bring out what seems to me a distortion in Dr Wistrich's perception which is important and which he shares with some of the other books already mentioned. His concentration on his subject tends to limit his ability to focus on the worlds in which they lived. The men are seen sharp and clear, but they move in a blurred world. This defect of vision is not confined to academic study. The main objection to the modern interest in victims is not that it leads to too much sympathetic stress upon what their environment has done to them but rather that it leads to a rather perfunctory treatment of that environment.

Dr Wistrich does not really render the bewildering, devastating experience that the emancipation of the Jews must have represented, because he does not really show what they were emancipated *into*. The step out of the warm, bubbling, intimate ghetto into the brilliant cold light and space of high 19th-century society was one of the sharpest and most unsettling changes that can be imagined.

There is an interesting pattern relevant here which was noted by Lionel Kochan in his review of Wistrich (*T.L.S.*, 20 August 1976). Russian-Jewish Marxists, Menshevik and Bolshevik alike, tended to come from outside the Jewish Pale of settlement: Trotsky and Martov, for example, came from the Ukraine and Constantinople respectively, and neither learnt Yiddish. The implication is surely that the Jews who reacted most savagely against Csarist Russia were those who had to confront it *on their own*. Jews within the Pale, dirt-poor though they might be and more regularly beaten up and more systematically oppressed, had at least a community and culture of their own, very nearly a crypto-nation. They were in their own terms insiders. By contrast, although Martov came from a rich family or perhaps *because* he did, he had more nakedly to deal with the fact of his difference. As a 7-year-old child, he experienced the Odessa pogrom. Relatives and servants begged his mother to hang ikons by the window to protect themselves from the fury of the mob. In his memoirs he wrote,

> Would I have become what I became if the Russian reality had not imprinted her coarse fingers on my plastic, youthful soul in that memorable night and carefully planted under the cover of that



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> burning pity which she aroused in my childlike heart, the seeds of a redeeming hatred?

Later, at school in St Petersburg:

> We, the few Jewish students, were confronted on all sides by a spontaneous view of ourselves as an "inferior" race rather than with anti-Semitic hatred. The others, sons of petty bourgeois Jews, carried this burden passively, attempted to survive unnoticed. . . . I, who had been brought up in a Russified and liberal milieu, was incapable of surrendering without a struggle. Exacerbated by the whole order of school life, my sensitiveness became a disease.

The strength of feeling is overwhelming: the sense of hopeless isolation—and yet at the same time the sense of being hemmed in by an alien society. The situation is so cumulatively intolerable and presents itself in so many different forms that it is no wonder that the reaction should be both intensely violent and extremely varied: self-hatred sometimes carried to ridiculous lengths so that the Jew telling stereotype jokes against his race himself becomes a stereotype; or a tense, touchy pride, an assumption of superiority, a claim to a secret unshared by the Gentiles; or a soft, exaggeratedly placatory submission to the prevailing culture; or an assumed indifference, a brutal contempt for all racial loyalties and prejudices (Marx's own solution). These varying reactions, sometimes combined, sometimes brilliantly successful, sometimes tragically destructive of happiness, have left an unforgettable impact upon the 19th and 20th centuries.

THESE REACTIONS CAN ultimately be traced back to what John Murray Cuddihy calls *The Ordeal of Civility*[6]. In this quirky, convoluted but rewarding book, Cuddihy attempts to analyse the nature of the shock of emancipation. The intimate, tribal life of the ghetto is suddenly exchanged for a life among strangers. This difference is made concrete in the bewildering formalities of modern life. These seemingly superficial social rituals in fact express that separateness, that sense of differentiation, which is at the heart of modernity.

In Cuddihy's view the doctrines of the great Jewish teachers—Marx, Freud, Lévi-Strauss—are really ideologies, strategies for confronting the dreadfully cold, separated world created by the Calvinist/Capitalist ethic. The economic explanation of alienation is a cover for a genuine *social* alienation. Indeed the supposed unmasking of economic conflict is in reality a masking of cultural conflict. The unmistakably nostalgic, reactionary aspects of Marxism are in fact harking back not to the imagined harmonies of the pre-Capitalist Middle Ages but to the direct experience of the pre-Capitalist Ghetto. Similarly, in Freudian theory the *id*, according to Cuddihy, is really the basic Jewish self which has been covered up in a protective but suffocating shell of hypocritical civility. Cuddihy uses Freud's train joke to back up this contention. Freud tells it in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905):

> A Galician Jew was travelling in a train. He had made himself really comfortable, had unbuttoned his coat and put his feet up on the seat. Just then a gentleman in modern dress entered the compartment. The Jew promptly pulled himself together and took up a proper pose. The stranger fingered through the pages of a notebook, made some calculations, reflected for a moment and then suddenly asked the Jew: "Excuse me, when is Yom Kippur [the Day of Atonement]?" "Oho!" said the Jew, and put his feet up on the seat again before answering.

The rough *Ostjude* meets a co-religionist who is trying to pass as a Gentile in a public place. As soon as the truth is revealed, the Galician reverts to the natural, unbuttoned intimacy of the ghetto *Gemeinschaft* where there is no separation between the public and private domain. This seems obvious enough. But when Freud comes to explain the joke, obviously aiming at a Gentile audience, he says that it "is meant to portray the democratic mode of thinking of Jews which recognises no distinction between lords and serfs." In other words, he turns a joke about cultural difference into a joke about class. Cuddihy believes that in Freud, as in many Jewish sociologists, economists, and psychologists, "the social nature of society is either politicised, psychologised or economised (*i.e.* construed on the model of the market)."

Similar strategies are to be found among the Irish (Cuddihy's own clan, presumably), Catholics generally, and American blacks, but perhaps less dramatically expressed because no other people were dumped into modernity quite so suddenly as the Jews nor made to feel quite so "primitive." Being modern is, at best, a difficult matter. It is least difficult perhaps for WASPS; they helped to create the modern world. The descendants of Calvin alone are at ease, or less hopelessly ill at ease, in this cold world of "specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart." And whenever they can't stand it, there is always a good Jewish shrink round the corner. Mr Cuddihy's thesis is weirdly expressed and often he outruns his argument, galloping back down exhilarating detours to regain his thread. But in his relentless insistence upon the *shock* of modernity he must surely be right.

IT HAS TO BE UNDERSTOOD that in this context you cannot claim to have been excluded from a club which you have not tried to join, which in

[6] *The Ordeal of Civility*. By JOHN MURRAY CUDDIHY. Basic Books, $12.95, £10.50.

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fact has not led you to believe that you might be accepted. To be an outsider you have to develop a consciousness of what it would be like to be an insider. Isaac Deutscher asserted that Jews became universalist revolutionaries because they existed on the margins of the great cultures and, as perpetual outsiders, were enabled to take the universalist view of things. Hyam Maccoby disagrees:

> Why, then, one is tempted to ask, have not the Gypsies produced the greatest revolutionary thinkers of all? (*Commentary*, April 1977).

But the Gypsies were not and are not on the margin. They are way beyond it. They live in a floating ghetto, rejecting and rejected by the rest of society. You might just as well ask why pre-Emancipation Jews did not produce a host of revolutionary thinkers too. To be marginal and to know that you are marginal requires cultural collision. It may well be (as Maccoby says and Wistrich rather too easily denies) that the messianic elements in Judaism have something to do with the universalism of Jewish revolutionaries. But it is somewhat perverse to refuse to recognise that the extraordinary impact of emancipation must have had a far more *direct* influence than the messianic tradition on the minds of revolutionaries who had so fiercely rejected the religion of their fathers.

An initial, transient exclusion is not enough. The unease of strangers and newcomers and the suspicion of the natives will not by themselves bake a rock-hard revolutionism. For the promise of an open society, however imperfectly realised in practice, soon withers the revolutionary enthusiasm. Cultural immigrants have only to cherish some slight hope of being accepted one day to swallow the hypocrisies and humiliations of an alien polite society. Only thorough and persistent exclusion can provide the reserves of resentment sufficient to create a body of hard revolutionaries. Even then the revolutionary cadre also needs for success a genuine conviction that the prevailing system is rotten and doomed. He must have not only a feeling of exclusion but a premonition of social collapse.

HISTORIANS CONCENTRATE TOO MUCH on successful revolutions and successful revolutionaries (partly because they sell better, partly because it is more inspiriting to write about the winning side). We need more surveys like Laqueur's *Guerrilla* which reminds us how rarely revolutionary movements succeed against a régime which is both determined and moderately competent, and more detailed monographs like William J. Fishman's *East End*

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Jewish Radicals 1875–1914,[7] an affectionate and thoughtful account of a neglected corner in the history of the Left. It is clear enough that the East End anarchists and communists enjoyed huge support in the sweatshops, that they were protesting against terrible hardships and real exploitation, and that they scared the authorities. Yet within a very few years the whole movement had virtually disappeared and now survives only in literary reminiscence and parody or in the faded photographs of Winston Churchill at the Siege of Sidney Street.

What happened? Some of the reasons Fishman gives for the failure—the fact, for example, that the East End Jews were recent immigrants, uncertain of their rights, terrified of being thrown out, and with few contacts with British trade unions—could just as well be reasons why they took up more extreme politics than did indigenous sweated labour. The Great War drained off the more Anglicised second generation. Many of the leading activists flocked enthusiastically back to Russia to join in the Revolution.

But the general explanation for the decline of radical activity must be that the exclusion was only a temporary consequence of being a refugee. The immigrants learnt English; they climbed out of the sweatshops. They made money; they gained confidence. For East End Jews British society was unimaginably open by Czarist standards; it was also, for all its injustices, a confident society. To know it at that time was to know that it was not worth fighting to destroy. It was neither incompetent nor exclusive—except in Ireland, which provides the simplest demonstration of the conditions of revolutionary activity.

For so long as the Catholics in Northern Ireland feel themselves to be excluded from the dominant culture, so long will the IRA continue to exist in some form, however skeletal. But only when the British régime shows itself to be incompetent, weak-willed or internally divided, will the IRA be able to operate as an active guerrilla force. To be consumed in a Revolution, a Régime must be both exclusive and incompetent. Unless it callously and consistently excludes from its care and concern a considerable number of its citizens there will be no revolution.

A REVOLUTIONARY is not a demiurge selected by destiny. He is a man existing in and created by the political and historical world, who has to uphold a conviction that this world is corrupt and doomed and that he can and must smash it and rebuild it. This conviction can survive only at a particular psychic temperature and degree of humidity. The plant is a delicate one; only revolutionaries themselves can know just how delicate. Mr Fishman shows beautifully—as only a close-focus study like this can do—not only the two steps forward, but the one or two steps back of revolutionary activity. Anarchist leaders die, emigrate to more promising revolutionary terrain, become respectable, get married, devote themselves to spiritual concerns or to bread-and-butter trade-union issues. Revolutionary groups, like other groups, are not only divided over tactics and doctrine, but are also always changing composition. Morale is up one day, down the next.

Indeed the greater part of revolutionary literature is taken up with an obsessive, hypochondriacal conversation about the prospects for survival, so much so that the question of what is to happen on the day after the Revolution is often quite neglected. Naturally this conversation has its own gentilities. Revolutionaries do not ask whether they have a hope in hell of breaking the Régime's will; they talk about whether the "conditions are ripe." They do not talk about the possibility that the extension of political rights and social security to the oppressed and excluded may sap revolutionary fervour; instead, they warn of the dangers of "repressive tolerance."

The reason for these gentilities is painfully clear. Once the revolutionaries concede that their situation can be straightforwardly described and analysed in the language of the existing culture, their claim to the sole privilege of action begins to collapse. To by-pass the dialectic is to deny the revolutionary's assertion that he alone possesses the inside knowledge of history and the truly undistorted consciousness. The initiative passes back to the existing culture. Without his validating ideology the Revolutionary has no more right to act upon other people than anyone else. He has the right of course to demand fair and equal treatment for Jews or Georgians or Blacks or the Poor, but he always possessed that right, as does everyone else.

The purpose of the ideology is to provide the Revolutionary with a theory that will both demonstrate that the culture from which he is excluded is a contemptible sham and validate his claims to destroy it. The problem is to produce a theory which both transcends bourgeois ideology but at the same time carries enough of the weight of bourgeois morality to refute the bourgeoisie on their own terms. It is this problem—in essence a problem of propaganda—which Marxist rhetoric solves so brilliantly.

REVOLUTIONARY FEELING begins in the perception of fraud. The fraud is not isolated nor directed at any particular person for personal motives. It is systematic and collective, per-

[7] *East End Jewish Radicals 1875–1914*. By WILLIAM J. FISHMAN. Duckworth, £6.50.

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petrated against one class by another for reasons of class which the perpetrators themselves may not be aware of. The realities are obscured by a mask which must be torn off if we are to understand and act aright.

Armed with this theory, the Revolutionary is able not merely to dismiss all bourgeois ripostes as fatally flawed by false consciousness but also to appropriate the language of bourgeois morality and use the powerful emotional charge it still carries for his own cause. He too talks of "fraud . . . crime . . . theft" but in a new sense which permits him the pleasure of reviling the wretched capitalists in their own traditional rhetoric of disapproval while denying them the individual moral responsibility which would give them the right to answer back. Their perception of reality is irremediably warped and they are thus to be treated as patients not agents.

THERE IS IN THIS appropriation of the enemy's vocabulary something unexpectedly impish, an element of youthful *chutzpah* which even after its bureaucratic fossilisation by generations of apparatchiks has never quite disappeared from Marxist rhetoric. It is the jeer of the small boy sitting on the wall at the fat gentleman in the top hat walking past—silly old chimpanzee, can't catch me.

In analysing the make-up of revolutionary movements—how many blue-collars, how many intellectuals, how many national minorities, how many without civil rights, how many without a decent income—we ought never to forget that by far the largest revolutionary class is and always has been the young. It was not until the events of May-June 1968 which involved only the young that the full significance of this fact began to sink in. Usually in the past, it has been taken for granted or even ignored. In the USA and Western Europe now, though, revolutionary classes are in short supply. And for the first time the young have been discussed (usually under the more dignified appellation of "the students") as a separate class, most notably by Herbert Marcuse.

In Marcuse's view, the mass of the working class is now conservatively inclined, because

> capitalist mass-democracy is perhaps to a higher degree self-perpetuating than any other form of government or society; and the more so the more it rests, not on terror and scarcity but on efficiency and wealth, and on the majority will of the underlying and administered population. (*An Essay on Liberation*, 1972, Penguin ed. p. 70)

It is true that "underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and the unemployable" (*One Dimensional Man*, 1965).

But why should middle-class students who are neither exploited nor persecuted but on the contrary are the crown princes of this capitalist mass-democracy ally themselves with this substratum? Partly, Marcuse says, because they are disgusted by the waste and injustice and violence which the System has to inflict in order to sustain itself. But beyond these noble impulses of sympathy with the underdogs the students have a personal interest in the destruction of the system:

> . . . the driving force is the refusal to grow up, to mature, to perform efficiently and "normally" in and for a society which compels the vast majority of the population to "earn" their living in stupid, inhuman and unnecessary jobs. . . . (*An Essay on Liberation*, p. 66).

This revealing explanation suggests a deep link between the students and other revolutionary classes, past and present. They all share a distaste for the imperatives of modernity: the division of labour, the rational organisation of time, the separation of work and play, the division between home and workplace—all the concrete differentiations which are so alien to the sensuous continuous languor which they imagine to have characterised the springtime of the world. It is the revolt against the tyranny of the clock that brings students and trade unionists together. To put the clock back is futile; it immediately starts to creep forward again. The only way to stop the clock is to smash it.

WE DO NOT NEED to enquire whether this view of modernity is in fact correct in order to see that what unites revolutionary classes is a cultural dislocation rather than a shared economic disadvantage and that the *prime* cause of that dislocation is not the domination of one class by another but rather the development, often jerky and uneven, of industrial society in general. Injustice, whether economic or racial, will surely sharpen the resentments of those who are its victims, but it is the cultural dislocation which imbues revolt with that particular messianic, destructive fervour which we call revolutionary.

This sense of being born in an out-of-joint time which has robbed man of a precious wholeness which he once possessed brings us back to the original connotation of "revolution" as a cyclical rather than linear figure in history. The revolutionary's vision of a golden age is not merely an allegorical way of describing the future that could be his. It is a direct and wistful reminder of the world he feels he has lost—the unseparated, unbounded, intimate continuum of childhood.

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The Start of an Auld Sang

The Scots & Nationalism—By PHILIP HOBSBAUM

THERE ARE NO SIGNS on the Border saying "Welcome to Bonny Scotland." What mostly you notice, once past Carlisle, is that the motor-road deteriorates into a death-trap known as the A74. Then you know you are in Caledonia (named by the Romans) stern and wild.

Perhaps the Romans were right to shut the Scots out with Hadrian's wall. The English have done just the opposite all these years. There is no way of writing a history of Scotland without involving a good deal of English history too. But the reverse is not so. England has meant much more to Scotland than Scotland to England. In other words, a great deal of English influence over Scottish affairs has been short-term, tactical, based on no sure knowledge of the place and trusting far too much to local gubernatorial talent.

The complacency down south about Scottish nationalism is a case in point. Southron men had better recognise that the demand for independence is not going to go away. In fact it has got much worse. No one protested about the crowning of Edward VII, even though he was only Edward I of Scotland. There was a certain amount of fuss about whether his great-granddaughter was really Elizabeth II; still more about the liner built on the Clyde and named after her. Commentators on the 1974 general election were impressed by the Nationalist candidates returned; I was still more impressed by the enormous number of votes clocked up by those who didn't quite make it. Those massive second preferences may well be converted into M.P.s first past the post, now that voters up here are sure that a Nationalist vote is never a wasted vote.

Nationalism has increased at an amazing rate since 1969, recently accelerated by the discovery of North Sea Oil and always powered by a keen distrust of the English. It is no fun here if you talk with an English accent. I find myself personally blamed for a number of incidents, like the Union of the Parliaments, that took place when my ancestors were serfs in Russia. One is made to feel an interloper who has taken away a Scotsman's job. The fact that England is full of Scotsmen doing very nicely doesn't lessen the anti-English feeling.

IT IS THIS DISTRUST of the English that keeps the Scots together. Before the English influence was felt, Scotland was a mélange of competing peoples. But the formation of the kingdom as a political entity was helped by the ceaseless interference of the English. It must be remembered that Scotland was, among other things, a gateway to the South. As such, it was liable to be trodden not only by Scotsmen "on the make", as J. M. Barrie said, but by the armies of Spain or France. So the English have always, since they were themselves a kingdom, attempted to assert some means of control over a potentially dangerous neighbour. It did not make for good relations, but it had a cohesive effect upon a people feeling themselves trespassed against. Puppet kings on the Scottish throne were met by violent resistance, and such resistance was the forerunner of the present nationalist movement. Bannockburn, Neville's Cross, Otterburn, Flodden—the history of Scotland is written in blood spilled by the Scots and English alike, but the English had more blood to spare.

By the time James VI and I united the crowns, distrust of the English was endemic among the Scots. It helped to keep them a nation. In his brilliant, though wayward, book,[1] William Ferguson, Reader in Scottish History at Edinburgh, declares the attempt at union was premature because the nations were poles apart, "animated by the ill-will of centuries of bitter antagonism." And the antagonism remained distinct even after the Union of the Parliaments in Anne's reign. It took more than the usual bribes to get this through. After Chancellor Seafield signed the Act winding up the Scottish

[1] *Scotland's Relations with England.* By WILLIAM FERGUSON. John Donald (8 Mayfield Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 1SA), £12.

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Parliament he is reported to have said "Now there's the end of an auld sang." But can one honestly say that, since 1707, the "sang" has ceased to be heard—in defiance, in importunity, or both?

NOBODY CAN BE CERTAIN whether the Union was a good thing or not, because nobody can know what would have happened if the Union had never taken place. In *Scotland and Nationalism*,[2] Christopher Harvie points out that, through the 18th and 19th centuries, Scotland prospered as it had never done before. New markets were opened up for her textiles; agricultural methods developed and improved; Glasgow became a great entrepôt for tobacco and sugar; Edinburgh New Town rose up from the slums; a new intelligentsia emerged. It is unlikely that all this would have happened by itself. What is more to the point is that, to get himself on, the canny Scot still had to head South. England was the arena where the effective careers of such diverse talents as Thomson, Adam and the Hunters took place, to say nothing of great commercial families such as the Gladstones. Worse than that, the Scots nation immolated itself through emigration. The country has never really been able to support its people. Therefore the hardy and the enterprising went abroad. And this is how, to no small extent, the USA, Canada and Australia were built up. Meanwhile, back in Scotland, the less able came to form a depleted genetic pool.

Moreover, the submersion of the Scottish Parliament meant that the centre of government remained in London. Scotland was then, as now, directed by a Secretary of State, while the government proper remained unconversant with Scottish affairs. Many think it remains so still. Emissary after emissary comes up to express astonishment at Scottish slums and Scottish deprivation. To the Scot, such ignorance of local conditions comes across as arrogance. Ministers of the Crown and Princes of the Blood should, they feel, know better. It is no good protesting that such arrogance is inadvertent. Assumptions are made that English law is necessarily better than Scottish law and that it is the latter that should be brought into line. Occasionally, still, one hears the phrase "North Britain", and nobody takes the logical step and refers to South Britain; indeed, I have never heard the term used.

Yet of what does Scotland consist? How, after all, does one define a country? Usually one points to a distinctive language, a definable culture, an identifiable race of inhabitants, an independent history. None of these criteria can be applied to Scotland. The gigantic Strathclyde Region to the West is one entity; the Lothians, whom they despise, another; the Highlands could yet be another, except communications and terrain ensure that they are divided among themselves. So are the Islands, who refused to be subsumed into a municipal Region. There is even a putative nationalist movement in Orkney, while Shetland wishes, after Scottish independence, to remain, ungovernably, with England. Therefore Scotland is, like Belgium or Pakistan, an association of quarrelling sub-groups. The technical term for this is a *noyau*. Usually such a nucleus is held together by pressure from outside. And that is exactly what English involvement has all these years provided. Without their residual distrust of their neighbour, the Scots would fly asunder: East and West, Highland and Lowland, Catholic and Protestant. They are Scottish because they ceaselessly define themselves as such in terms of their oppression by the English.

THIS COMES OUT very clearly in a recent compilation of studies by Scottish Nationalists called, strangely, *The Radical Approach*.[3] It would be better called something like *Pie over Skye*. The millennium, Scots will be glad to hear, is to come about directly Scotland becomes independent. All they need to do is to get the English off their backs. In one fantasy after another the English are blamed for Scottish lack of economic growth (Stephen Maxwell); Scotland's cultural debility (Isobel Lindsay); Scottish loss of population (Howie Firth); Scotland's lack of a sense of community (Andrew Currie); Scotland's uncompetitive industries (Gavin Kennedy); the dead hand of bureaucracy (David Hamilton); and so on. It is worth pointing out that, for these contributors, all good things are indigenous to Scotland and all bad things emerge from the English (not British) Parliament. One would imagine that the Scots possess no Ministers, return no M.P.s, have no civil servants—indeed, no say in the government at all.

Let us not underestimate the intensity of the feeling: self-pity is the one emotion guaranteed to be sincere. And it is notable that the Nationalist prose quickens into its greatest degree of vivacity when discussing the evil-doings of the South. "Scotland has been starved of capital", insists Colin Bell, "but our collective income has been cruelly taxed to finance borrowing." So England is a heartless leech, then? But in the same essay Mr Bell blames the Government for providing vast numbers of council houses and so depriving

[2] *Scotland and Nationalism*. By CHRISTOPHER HARVIE. Allen & Unwin, £7.50, paper £3.95.

[3] *The Radical Approach*. Edited by GAVIN KENNEDY. Q Press (58 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH9 1SA), £1.75.

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Scotland of a "national fund of homes." It seems that England (more properly, the British Government) cannot do right. Would the Scottish Nationalists feel better if no houses had been provided at all? And so I come to the nub of the argument.

The price of Independence has not been properly costed. One of the more insouciant contributors to *The Radical Approach* suggests that the new Scotland would provide a guaranteed income not only for the old, infirm, insane, burdened and those otherwise unemployable, but also for those "who chose to opt out of the labour market for no other reason than to do their own thing"! Another contributor suggests a decentralisation of government into component districts—all of whom, no doubt, would be glad to pay for the euphoria of just one of their number. Indeed, it is not clear how all the wonderful schemes projected by the Nationalists are to be financed.

A MORE SOBER SURVEY of a possible future for Scotland is provided by a compilation, *Scotland 1980*,[4] one of the most interesting books I have read for many a long day. A team of 13 economists met regularly through 1976 to exchange ideas and compare notes and drafts of what ultimately emerges as a collection of analytical papers. Anyone who wants to know something of the economics of self-government should look here.

On the whole, the economists of *Scotland 1980* are hopeful, but their modest conclusions are somewhat belied by the detailed facts they put forward. "In recent decades, few industrialised nations have had a slower economic growth than Scotland whose performance has been lamentable judged against the standards of the Western World", says the editor of *Scotland 1980*, Donald Mackay. "In a country of Scotland's size the capacity of the economic system to sustain the population has always been a matter of concern", agrees his colleague, David Simpson. J. W. McGilvray gloomily predicts that investment in Scotland from outside would be unlikely "since the ideological hue of a self-governing Scotland might appear uncertain." It is "an economy still dominated by its declining manufacturing base" (John Firn); it is "desperately short of entrepreneurial talent" (Alexander Kemp); it has "more serious industrial problems than most other parts of Britain and, in turn, Britain is considered to have a poor industrial record in comparison with most other European countries" (Charles Mulvey).

Contributor after contributor stresses the fact that a Scottish government would inherit serious problems that are indigenous to the country and not to be solved by the mere removal of a hypothetical English yoke. There are problems here that would demand considerable capital investment to put them right, together with—what no economist can command—a change of heart. The much-famed North Sea Oil, these economists insist, is a wasting asset; its benefits must be released slowly if the community is not to plunge into an orgy of expenditure that would founder with the exhaustion of the oil. Other matters, like national defence and the probable membership of NATO would be costly up to the limits of the envisaged economy to bear. Where is this funding to come from?

NOW I HAVE DONE a bit of costing myself, and it seems to me that an independent Scotland could work—with one major qualification. The Nationalists constantly refer to small Northern states as a means of comparison; their favourite example is Norway; and this is all right so far as it goes. But there is nothing in Norway like the Glasgow conurbation. The English may have perpetrated endless indignities upon the insulted Scots, but one thing is certain: the British government is pouring money into Glasgow like disinfectant into an open sewer, and this revenue is most definitely not raised within the Scottish economy. Does the District Council wish to reconstruct the run-down East Side of Glasgow? A grant is forthcoming—120 million pounds worth of grant. Is the Underground Railway to be renovated?—Central Government provides three and a half further millions. The Strathclyde Region is full of unemployed teachers: yet another grant "creates" 850 posts for them. The hard-pressed police force is found to be dangerously undermanned: a further grant still is found. At the moment the District Council is clamouring for help—from Central Government—to finance its highly controversial housing policy.

On and on it goes, until one can say that, apart from Northern Ireland, the effort to keep Glasgow within the Union is the most expensive luxury we have. Some of the people can't work; a good many won't work; a good many more are willing to work and can't find a job; two-thirds of the population live in council houses and so their labour is immobilised; there are more alcoholics per head of population than anywhere else, more violent crime, more truancy, more vandalism—the last bill presented was for 1976 and came to a staggering £2,592,884. And that is for vandalism alone! When one tots up the

[4] *Scotland 1980*. Edited by DONALD MACKAY. Q Press, £2.40.

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Lolita: Lo! Tail!

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expense of council housing, social security, crime and medicine, the expenditure is that of a small state on its own; and there is no corresponding yield in productivity. The conurbation with its defaced stonework and lacerated pavements is a monument to Citizen Grade VI: the walking wounded.

A good deal of this results from lack of control by Central Government. The long arm of administration wilts and loses its grip the further it extends from London. It drops its gifts indiscriminately and in vain. Central Government supplies the money; Regional and District Councils deliver the goods. Bad forecasting has ensured that the city is saddled with an external road system chronically under-used with the massive Kingston Bridge put in the wrong place and standing as an unusable folly. Two-thirds of the Darnley Estate, under-costed, late on completion and now to come down, reminds us that the District Council cannot predict population movement or growth. The Red Road high-rise development is now admitted to be a disaster area fitted only for vandals—and for the students who in future are to be housed there. In the middle of Glasgow stands the new Anderston Shopping Centre, already squalid, with shops either abandoned or never opened for fear of the vandals and derelicts who haunt the place. By the Mitchell Library stands a bridge designed to carry shops and a concourse over to an adjacent office block. The latter was found to be imperfect on completion and there was considerable difficulty in letting it. But it did not matter: there was no money to complete the bridge; none to demolish it, either. There it stands, vast, blotched and unnecessary, and the locals now call it the Bridge of Sighs.

WHO ARE THE GENTLEMEN and ladies who have interpreted an essentially benevolent government policy in such unacceptable ways? For many years, until recently, the Council was dominated by a political group, nominally Labour but mostly—with some honourable exceptions—bearing the semblance of an Irish-Catholic "family." The inadequacy of these people to cost, forecast or administer has to be experienced to be believed. Moreover, case after case of nepotism and even corruption comes up, only to be leniently judged, dismissed or for the relevant papers to be mislaid altogether. But the people of the city recently delivered their judgment upon a particularly hair-raising series of housing scandals and now, in lieu of the Family, an uneasy coalition of the SNP and the Conservative Party tries to run the city.

Glasgow is the victim of local inefficiency and

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the wrong kind of Government benevolence. Non-contingent kindness makes only for debility. To pour forth funds without, at local level, control as to how they are administered is to invite the kind of disaster that stares out at one from a thousand headlines:

> A lot of councillors are picking up a tenner a day for coming into meetings that last no time at all. There is no need for half the meetings. (Glasgow District Councillor quoted by *Daily Record*, 16 April 1976)
>
> Hundreds of highly paid council officials face the sack because Scotland's regions blundered so badly with their budgets. (*Sunday Mail*, 24 October 1976)
>
> A plague of rats at St George's Cross has been dealt with by the residents themselves. "We complained to the Pest Control but they just said nothing more could be done." (*West End News*, 25 July 1975)
>
> "We are tired and disgusted with the conditions in which we have to live daily." (Dalmarnock Church minister, *Glasgow Herald*, 18 June 1976)
>
> The vast hoodlum element that clings to Ibrox [Rangers' Football Club] like a disease. (*Sunday Mail*, 10 October 1976)
>
> The problem probably costs between 35 million and 50 million annually. (*Observer*, on alcoholism in Scotland, 26 September 1976)
>
> Law and Order in Glasgow is on the verge of total collapse. (*Sunday Mail*, 3 July 1977)

This last is no exaggeration. Within hours of the *Sunday Mail* report on law and order, Central Government granted a million pounds to Strathclyde Region's police force. But it was a drop in the ocean. I do not know whether Greater Glasgow is ungovernable, but it is certainly not being governed. And this is hardly the fault of undercapitalisation from Westminster.

WITHOUT THIS PLAGUE AREA Scotland could be independent in the same sense that Norway is. Further: the Highlands could be fertilised greatly to increase the quantity of farm land; fish-farming could be developed to fulfil its tremendous potential; ship-building could be reconstructed to take account of the latest research into (for instance) computerised windjammers and mammoth airships for heavy freight. All kinds of new and challenging skills in textiles and plastics could be explored. But how does a country go about this saddled with the dead weight of a region whose biggest employer is Social Security and whose landlord is the heavily subsidised—and subsidising—District Council? Even if the run-down shipyards of the Clyde were to be utilised, Scotland alone could not finance the industrial developments envisaged, not if the North Sea Oil were plentiful

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enough to last another hundred years. Still less could it afford to carry so abject a pensioner as its largest conurbation.

Personally I am anti-nationalist because I see no use in splitting resources into a proliferation of mini-states, each in any case only nominally independent of more powerful neighbours. I wish better for Scotland than to see her join the serried ranks of Surinam, Bougainville, East Timor, Djibouti and the Seychelles, each with a little begging-bowl held out to the USA, USSR or the United Nations. Economic realities alone would restrict performance. Much of what the Scots object to is the result of maladministration and much of this derives from the absence of effective delegates on the spot. What with Central Government misprision and local government inefficiency, we have been running the wrong system too long; but let us not call it English colonisation.

The essence of administration is communication, and it is communication that has let us down. At the moment there is an excessive overlap between Ministers, M.P.s, Regional Councillors and District Councillors. The result is that whole areas of activity are neglected because each administrative component is under the impression that another component is doing the job. It has never been clear to me why all M.P.s have to meet in grand session all the time in Parliament; especially when it is common knowledge that few of them turn up to debates except to vote. Suppose the Mother of Parliaments were severely trimmed so that it could meet one week in each month and mostly in committee. Then the M.P.s of a particular region could constitute a kind of Upper House in that Region and commute between that and Westminster. Moreover, there could be paid local councillors forming a Lower House resident in the community. And there could be appointed a Minister of State responsible for the region. It would be his task to consult with both Houses, to report to Westminster, and to filter central policy back to the Region through his knowledge of local needs. It would be something like a version of Cromwell's underestimated project for a conclave of major-generals, each responsible to central government for a specific district of Britain.

I think for areas like Scotland and Wales with nationalist aspirations, the system presently current in Yugoslavia could be studied. There they have semi-autonomous regions with trade links and defence links within a loose federation. With appropriate adaptation, something of the sort could work here. And if the Federation were Europe rather than the United Kingdom, or Europe in alliance with Canada and the United States, who is going to object to that?

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Seen in a global context, our economic and foreign policies are at one.

The enemy of the Scots is not the English people. It is the same enemy that besets us all: torpor, overcrowding, pollution, declining industries, inefficient distribution, unimaginative management, an inflexible work-force, tactical rather than strategic government. To contest all this it is necessary to unite our resources, not divide them. The bigger the economic unit, federated though it be, the more chance we all have of success.

Against Inherited Culture

On George Eliot—By TOM PAULIN

THE DISMAL MEDIOCRITY of both these accounts of George Eliot's fiction is instructive and revealing. They are very different—one is English, the other American—but each is the helpless function of its particular outmoded cultural idea.

Robert Liddell writes out of a defunct tradition of good sense and donnish chat over the port and walnuts. A gentleman with vague scholarly ambitions, he offers a buffer's guide to an author who, he confesses, "has frequently irritated me by monstrosities of style." He holds the quaint belief that criticism "ought to be a part of polite letters", and is blandly unconscious of the fact that his book is in no sense a work of criticism—it merely retells George Eliot's narratives.[1]

Liddell refers to her characters in the way some people talk about *The Archers:* Gwendolen Harleth is "an unpleasant young woman", and Daniel Deronda, in a more dangerous phrase, is a "Jewish prig." The trouble with George Eliot, he suggests, is that her sympathy with nonconformism made her unable to appreciate what it means to be tactful, tasteful and a gentleman. Moreover she was a "Philistine" who was "almost invariably stupid about music as about the other arts." Her work is "devoid of charm" and she is sometimes guilty of using the word "unfashionable"—a "sneering and vulgar" term which allies her with that envious "outsider", D. H. Lawrence. Too much, it seems, has been said about her being a social thinker: "happily she was no such thing." Rather, she was a poor, unfortunate autodidact whose work is riddled with faults which only prove that "autodidacticism will never take the place of instilled or inherited culture." By "culture" Liddell means a formalised, élitist stupidity adept at putting down ill-bred genius. And his account rises to a pitch of eccentricity when he attempts to patronise Henry James whose "visual taste was probably no better than George Eliot's." His discussion is a bizarre compendium of cultivated inanities which reads as though Mr Brooke in *Middlemarch* has at last "you know, put pen to paper, what?"

TO MOVE from Liddell's brainless, mannerly chat to Laura Comer Emery's strident self-assertion[2] is to exchange the decadence of surface civility for the narcissism of authenticity. Meaning in literature is now solely a matter of self-discovery, or the "ego-syntonic transformation of the unacceptable fantasy content", rather than Liddell's tasteful arrangement of appropriate diction. *The Mill on the Floss* is therefore "an explosive expression of conflicting needs, as powerful as a primal scream but more complex." Most of George Eliot's characters suffer from anal-sadistic needs or a wish to return to the womb. Incredibly, Emery actually believes in "penis envy" and to prove that Maggie Tulliver has a similar hang-up she adduces the critical authority of the oddly named Reva Stump and Karen Horney who have much to say about this and about castration complexes. Her essays are a series of out-dated Freudian analyses where landscapes are either cloacal or phallic, and which offer insights like: "The Silas story . . . moves from anal-retentive solipsism towards an Oedipal configuration."

If Liddell speaks from a class-bound tradition of inherited culture, Emery expresses the opposite extreme of a puritanical insistence upon the self. Novel-writing is just like a session with the analyst, for it is only "by writing the story that the novelist can discover—not his story—but its writer." All writing is therefore "a struggle with the self."

It's this deafening solipsism which makes her offer a definition of one of George Eliot's most famous phrases which is the absolute opposite of what Eliot meant. The passage in which it

[1] *The Novels of George Eliot.* By ROBERT LIDDELL. Duckworth, £5.95.

[2] *George Eliot's Creative Conflict: The Other Side of Silence.* By LAURA COMER EMERY. University of California Press, $10.00, £7.95.

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occurs supplies Emery's title and epigraph, if little else:

> That element of tragedy which lies in the very fact of frequency, has not yet wrought itself into the coarse emotion of mankind; and perhaps our frames could hardly bear much of it. If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity.

In writing her novels, George Eliot apparently approached the "hidden patterns of her own unconscious mind"—patterns that lie "on the other side of silence."

WHAT IS DISTRESSING about this utterly erroneous assertion is its failure to understand that George Eliot is describing an experience of intense suffering which eventually leads Dorothea Brooke to a deeper knowledge, not of herself, but of other people's lives. It's an awareness she achieves by setting her own wishes aside. George Eliot is concerned here, as throughout her work, with the difficult task of transcending the self, and if there's one thing she is *not* exploring or trying to discover it is her own personality. Far from possessing a narcissistic interest in her own mind (conscious or otherwise) George Eliot is describing a process which in *Daniel Deronda* she calls the "transmutation of self." She shows the beginnings of this process in the early pages of *Middlemarch* where Dorothea mistakenly aspires to "that submergence of self in communion with Divine perfection which seemed to her to be expressed in the best Christian books of widely-distant ages." She then mistakes the arid figure of Casaubon for that divine perfection, is severely disappointed, and then, instead of simply rejecting him, comes to an awareness of Casaubon's irreducibly different personality. She begins to understand that there may be "a sad consciousness in his life which made as great a need on his side as on her own", and it's from this new consciousness that one of George Eliot's most remarkable comments on the action issues:

> We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves: Dorothea had early begun to emerge from that stupidity, but yet it had been easier to her to imagine how she would devote herself to Mr Casaubon, and become wise and strong in his strength and wisdom, than to conceive with that distinctness which is no longer reflection but feeling—an idea wrought back to the directness of sense, like the solidity of objects—that he had an equivalent centre of self, whence the lights and shadows must always fall with a certain difference.

This is one of the finest moments in the novel, but neither Emery nor Liddell refers to it. Here Dorothea is shown to realise the absolute otherness of her husband's personality. It's a realisation which is achieved by breaking away from her own selfish needs and illusions, and is a paradigm for George Eliot of the novelist's task which involves the most complete respect for a series of other lives, and which has nothing to do with self-discovery. Eliot's fiction is remarkable for this profound humanism, and more than any other English novelist she combines the deepest human sympathy with a uniquely powerful intellectual response to character.

If Dorothea's recognition of Casaubon's essential personality draws on philosophical language for its presentation, it's a recognition which exists purely, and necessarily impractically, on the human level of the novel's interest. It occurs outside history and does not involve any sympathy on George Eliot's part for the social and cultural references of Casaubon's character, because this would be inconsistent with her hostility to what Casaubon historically represents. His personality is shaped so much in relation to social circumstance that it's quite impossible to ignore the fact that George Eliot as "social thinker" works through complex definitions and placings of character, environment and private relationships. Casaubon is therefore placed as the sterile embodiment of a class-bound, reactionary culture—in Liddell's unthinking phrase he is "inherited culture." The tradition he represents is monumental and tomb-like; there ideas have become institutionalised—they have been reduced to dead facts and received opinions. This is the tyranny of an establishment which, like Casaubon himself, is the "lifeless embalmment of knowledge." George Eliot places a particular insistence on the words *knowledge*, *consciousness*, and *idea*—they are living, active terms for her—and through Casaubon she is demonstrating the paralysis of a culture which kills ideas. Casaubon's futility lies in trying to create a living idea from the fragments of dead myths. His sterile scholarship cannot be intellectual: the values he represents are merely an acquired obtuseness.

SO, ON ONE LEVEL of the novel, a struggle is shown to be taking place between hostile values. For if Casaubon (like the miser Featherstone) symbolises a stagnant, cultural immobility, a costive paralysis, Dorothea is the Spirit working in history. The essence of Spirit is freedom, but in order to express itself Spirit needs Form; and so Dorothea mistakenly selects the dead form of Casaubon in order to realise herself. On the personal level of the novel

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she is trapped in his sepulchral egoism, while on the public level the Spirit she represents is shown to be baffled and obstructed by historical circumstance—the "dead hand" of tradition.

If Dorothea chooses Casaubon, he also selects her, and his gradual hostility to her is that of the servile spirit (the "fixed constituent" in James's phrase) to the free spirit. He is an institutionalised idea at war with a free intelligence. He had hoped to reduce her to an instrument of dead knowledge, but when she demands to be treated as intelligent he realises his failure. Essentially, their struggle is a version of Lovelace's with Clarissa, and of Osmond's with Isabel Archer.

George Eliot makes this conflict subtly apparent in her account of their Roman honeymoon where she writes that:

> in certain states of dull forlornness Dorothea all her life continued to see the vastness of St Peter's, the huge bronze canopy, the excited intention in the attitudes and garments of the prophets and evangelists in the mosaics above, and the red drapery which was being hung for Christmas spreading itself everywhere like a disease of the retina.

The frozen monuments, like Casaubon's tradition, become the death of the very organ of knowledge. The institutions of Christian society are hostile to ideas: it's a statement which is made covertly through Dorothea's intense personal disillusion. Similarly, she is shown responding to a crazed landscape of ruins and palaces whose vast murals figure her actual predicament, that of the Spirit trapped in history:

> Ruins and basilicas, palaces and colossi, set in the midst of a sordid present, where all that was living and warm-blooded seemed sunk in the deep degeneracy of a superstition divorced from reverence; the dimmer but yet eager Titanic life gazing and struggling on walls and ceilings; the long vistas of white forms whose marble eyes seemed to hold the monotonous light of an alien world.

Here, the conflict between the living idea and the stifling, institutional embodiments of ideas is vividly presented. And there's a marvellous passage later in the novel where Dorothea is shown in the process of realising the extent of her entombment.

> [Her] blooming full-pulsed youth stood there in a moral imprisonment which made itself one with the chill, colourless, narrowed landscape, with the shrunken furniture, the never-read books, and the ghostly stag in a pale fantastic world that seemed to be vanishing from the daylight.

The hostility to the free intelligence of inherited and solidified culture (its sterile pride like a stag's head, its books unread or forgotten) is felt in the malevolence of furniture. Again, this is a phantasmagoric scene which is both acutely emotional and intellectual.

Dan Jacobson

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DOROTHEA IS RELEASED from her stultifying imprisonment by Ladislaw whose character—significantly, if less accessibly—is based on the cultural references of Shelley's personality (the revolutionary, not the plaintive Shelley). Shelley, very importantly, was a Chartist hero and his face was embroidered on their banners, so through the personality of Ladislaw George Eliot is presenting all that is opposed to the reactionary traditionalism of Casaubon. Ladislaw is explicitly compared to Shelley and the reader is meant to understand the revolutionary spirit of his character through this reference, just as in *Felix Holt* we're meant to see in Harold Transome the embodiment of a Byronic politics whose limitations the novel explores. Byron, too, was a Chartist hero, but George Eliot exposes the social implications of Byronic hedonism (for all his imaginative ascendancy, Byron was essentially a Benthamite who reduced reality to a limited number of basic appetites, and who unconsciously supported the status quo).

George Eliot makes the idea of consciousness developing in history explicit in *Daniel Deronda* when Mordecai tells Daniel:

> "The world grows, and its frame is knit together by the growing soul; dim, dim at first, then clearer and more clear, the consciousness discerns remote stirrings. As thoughts move within us darkly, and shake us before they are fully discerned—so events, so beings: they are knit with us in the growth of the world. You have risen within me like a thought not fully spelled: my soul is shaken before the words are all there. The rest will come—it will come."

The difficulty is that nowhere in her novels can we feel that there is a possible society which makes the idea conscious: Maggie Tulliver is annihilated by the revolutionary consciousness symbolised by the flood at the end of *The Mill on the Floss*; Felix Holt disappears into a vague privacy; Daniel Deronda leaves for the distant future; and even though Ladislaw, damagingly, is "at last returned to Parliament by a constituency that paid his expenses", he and Dorothea also vanish into an unhistoric privacy. Fine as the novel's closing sentence is, there is the inescapable sense that George Eliot is desperately arguing for the practical effects of Dorothea's "finely-touched spirit":

> But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.

Somehow, it's evasively suggested, the body politic is susceptible to the finer feelings of certain individuals—a suggestion which parallels the idea of free will George Eliot indulges in her

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depiction of Felix Holt's independent action within the deterministic situation of a mob riot.

Dorothea's failure—that of the Spirit baffled and obstructed, then passing outside history—is really no different from Lydgate's. His marriage to Rosamund Vincy expresses a similar struggle between intellectual freedom and established stasis. Through Rosamund George Eliot is exploring another cultural strand—that of the property-owning bourgeoisie which values things and is hostile to ideas. Rosamund's "terrible tenacity" pits new furniture and an expensive house against Lydgate's effort towards consciousness. As a child he begins to travel towards an idea:

> the world was made new to him by a presentiment of endless processes filling the vast spaces planked out of his sight by that wordy ignorance which he had supposed to be knowledge. From that hour Lydgate felt the growth of an intellectual passion.

But his intellectual effort is finally frustrated by Rosamund's acquisitive passions and is trapped as surely among her furniture as Dorothea is entombed in Casaubon's sterile tradition.

AN EVEN MORE INTENSE, if less politically relevant, struggle takes place between Gwendolen Harleth and Grandcourt in *Daniel Deronda*. The languidly selfish Grandcourt is very similar to Captain Sholto, in *The Princess Casamassima*, whom James describes as "one of those odd figures produced by old societies that have run to seed, corrupt and exhausted civilizations." But if George Eliot shows the eventual defeat of Spirit by tyrannic tradition, James insists that this movement towards knowledge is bound to fail politically because its representatives can only succeed in respecting the cultural riches of the society they oppose. What becomes "supreme" in Hyacinth Robinson's mind "was not the idea of how the society that surrounded him should be destroyed; it was much more the sense of the wonderful precious things it had produced, of the fabric of beauty and power it had raised." Hyacinth's earlier radical awareness of "the high human walls, the deep gulfs of tradition, the steep embankments of privilege and dense layers of stupidity fencing the 'likes' of him off from social recognition" is shown to be only a stage in his development of an aesthetic consciousness which in rejecting political commitment is forced to annihilate itself. James brilliantly shows a subterranean, revolutionary urging towards consciousness in *The Princess Casamassima*, but eventually retreats from its implications. He refuses, finally, to endorse the comprehensive

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social vision in this passage from *The Mill on the Floss:*

> In writing the history of unfashionable families, one is apt to fall into a tone of emphasis which is very far from being the tone of good society, where principles and beliefs are not only of an extremely moderate kind, but are always presupposed, no subjects being eligible but such as can be touched with a light and graceful irony. But then, good society has its claret and its velvet carpets, its dinner-engagements six weeks deep, its opera and its faery ball-rooms; rides off its ennui on thorough-bred horses, lounges at the club, has to keep clear of crinoline vortices, gets its science done by Faraday, and its religion by the superior clergy who are to be met in the best houses: how should it have time or need for belief and emphasis? But good society, floated on gossamer wings of light irony, is of very expensive production; requiring nothing less than a wide and arduous national life condensed in unfragrant, deafening factories, cramping itself in mines, sweating at furnaces, grinding, hammering, weaving under more or less oppression of carbonic acid—or else, spread over sheepwalks, and scattered in lonely houses and huts on the clayey or chalky corn-lands, where the rainy days look dreary. This wide national life is based entirely on emphasis—the emphasis of want, which urges it into all the activities necessary for the maintenance of good society and light irony....

At a time when different and exhausted traditions of literary criticism are declaring their indifference to this kind of social and intellectual awareness, it's necessary to remind ourselves of the relationship between imaginative issues and practical reality. It is a connection which neither Liddell's smug notion of inherited value nor Emery's fascination with the "hungry, shivering self" is capable of making.

The Game of the Name

Partridge's Catch Phrases—By D. J. Enright

WHILE CONFESSING that he doesn't really know what a catch phrase is, Eric Partridge defines it as "a saying that has caught on, and pleases the public."[1] Catch phrases may be not phrases but sentences or even single words. They are to be distinguished (if not very certainly) from clichés and proverbial sayings: "all depends on the context, the nuance, the tone."

Since the world is full of catch phrases and a lexicographer is only human (a c.p. missing from Partridge, though "he's one of us" is listed as a homosexual c.p.), it will be petty to complain of c.pp. missing from Partridge. And if one does complain, one may well be told that they are clichés or proverbial sayings. "A standing prick has no conscience" began as "a low c.p." but by 1920 had achieved the status of (unofficial) proverb, while "you'll have your work cut out" is a c.p. only when addressed to a (commonly Australian) mother about to have her third or fourth baby—otherwise it is merely a cliché. An instance of (not otherwise found in this dictionary) Catch-22? But we mustn't take the mick(e)y (another absentee) out of Mr Partridge. Oedipus schmoedipus (also missing), what's it matter so long as he loves his mother tongue?

Better to enjoy what is present, and in particular the catch phrases one hadn't come across before, thus proving that one is not a mere member of the public. But first, a juster matter for complaint, let us remark on a few oddnesses in this book. It is incorrect to say that "great minds think alike" (ascribed to "*c.* 1890, perhaps a decade earlier") does not appear in dictionaries of quotations or of proverbs, since it is given in *Everyman's Dictionary of Quotations and Proverbs* as a 20th-century proverb, with a reference to an unspecified older form in the 17th century. "Alone I did it" is described as latish C19–20, and Partridge states that his only early record of it occurs in a play by Alfred Sutro of 1906. If Sutro, why not Shakespeare (1607–8)?—

> *like an eagle in a dovecote, I*
> *Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli.*
> *Alone I did it.*

Of "are you keeping it for the worms?" ("a Canadian c.p., dating from *c.* 1940") Partridge remarks that it is "accidentally reminiscent of Shakespeare's famous attack on the value of virginity as such." Shakespeare's famous attack? Much more reminiscent of Marvell's playful ploy, "Worms shall try/That long preserv'd Virginity." On "look you!", a Cymricism "well known since C16 at latest", he comments: "so much so that it occurs frequently in the plays by James Shirley (1596–1666)." More to the point, it

[1] *A Dictionary of Catch Phrases: British and American, from the Sixteenth Century to the Present Day.* By Eric Partridge. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £7.95.

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occurs very frequently indeed in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599): eleven times in the scene in which Fluellen makes his first appearance.

In his historical notes Partridge tends to adduce popular sources and instances—Noël Coward, Wodehouse, Terence Rattigan, Edward Albee, ITMA—which is obviously apt, given the subject. But I think he underestimates the influence on the popular tongue of writers more elevated: *Hamlet*, as we know, is made up of catch phrases (among them "for this relief—much thanks!", as Partridge notes). It is pleasant to come across Stevie Smith's "not waving but drowning" admitted as a highbrow c.p. "of *c.* 1958–70." Shortly before her death Partridge wrote to Stevie Smith to ask whether she had coined or adopted the phrase "a good time was had by all." She replied that she had taken it from reports in parish magazines on church outings, and asked in turn, "Are you the Eric Partridge of the Slang dictionary. But no! he must by now be dead." No, better read than dead.

Partridge suspects that "better Red than dead" was suggested by Hilaire Belloc's epigram,

> *When I am dead, I hope it may be said:*
> *His sins were scarlet, but his books were read.*

An unlikely derivation, I would think. Solzhenitsyn (and John R. Silber, ENCOUNTER, February 1977) credit or discredit Bertrand Russell with the saying. Basil Brush ought to have got a mention in the entry on "don't get your knickers in a twist", if only as the populariser of the c.p. for a younger generation. (No connection, between this c.p. and the probably older one, "you come home with your knickers torn and say you found the money!": "indicative of extreme scepticism.") And the entry on "some like it hot"—"became a c.p. somewhere about 1965"—certainly should have mentioned the immensely successful film of that name, starring Monroe, Lemmon and Curtis, made in 1959.

No flowers—by request! (Well, Partridge tells us that "this jocular c.p. means 'no complaints, *please*!'.") For "to —er is human" (a pun involving "the slurred sound of dubiety"). So let us look at some entertaining and unusual commonplaces, such as the very first item in the book "*à d'autres!*", an early and brisk version of "tell it to the Marines!" fashionable among English coxcombs and coquettes *c.* 1660–80. Or, in the 20th century, "hell hath no fury like a woman's corns." "Les be friends" (Lesbian) is new to me, perhaps understandably, but so is "as easy as shaking the drops off your John" ("essentially masculine"). So are the (mostly Australian) phrases, "the more firma, the less terra" (used by those nervous of air travel, "since *c.* 1950") and "give her twopence!". By

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the latter hangs quite a tale: it is used "on sighting a beautiful female child" and suggests that the addressee should provide her with the necessary coins to ring him when she reaches the age of consent.

Nor can I say I have often caught the phrase "she is so innocent that she thinks Fucking is a town in China", reported to be "a mostly Londoners' c.p. dating since *c.* 1940." Or "that'll put your back up", meaning (*via* cats fighting) "that'll make you amorous." Or even the tongue-twisting "twinges round hinges through binges": since *c.* 1950 and referring to rheumatism and its possible cause. Since "trot the udyju Pope o' Rome" went out the year I was born, I can be forgiven for not knowing that it meant, by way of back- and rhyming-slang, "send the wife/female home." A notably grim, resonant c.p. is "the hills are closing in on him", *c.* 1953–5 (or earlier?) among UN troops in Korea, referring to the forbidding landscape, and signifying the onset of madness. But it is nice to see that the gibe against marriage, "why buy a cow just because you like milk?", has a highbrow equivalent: "why buy a book when you can join a library?" (Cf. the genteel "the day the omelette hit the fan.") One does rather wonder whether Partridge's esotericisms really qualify by his definition of a catch phrase. How big is the public they please? But after all the reader will want to learn—and a dictionary confining itself to what he already knew wouldn't be much fun.

THOUGH Partridge occasionally makes heavy weather of historical backgrounds, as in the entry on "have at thee (*or* ye *or* you)" and the mini-lecture on Coué, his commentary often takes an agreeably personal turn. He tells us *en passant* that Colley Cibber's play *Love's Last Shift* was translated into French as *La Dernière chemise de l'amour*. The c.p. "my wife (*less commonly* my husband) doesn't understand me" provokes him to expostulate: "What are *they* complaining about? It would be damned awkward for the speakers if they *were* understood!" On "a fart's the cry of an imprisoned turd" he comments that the c.p. is "as essentially poetical as it is superficially coarse . . . clearly an allusion to the cry of a bird imprisoned in a cage." So one is a little surprised when he jibs at "it's a poor arse that never rejoices"—equally poetic I would have thought, but, according to Partridge, the property of "those 'gangs' or cliques or fraternities of would-be wits in which public-houses abound." He is disapproving of casbahs too ("come with me to the Casbah!", to be spoken leeringly): "supposed to be a scene of romance, but usually disappointing and dangerous."

The use of "at this moment in time" he rightly

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considers nauseating, and one of his correspondents damns "the name of the game" as smug and knowing—adjectives I could wish he had applied to "didn't they do well!" and that sports commentator's cant, "what a turn-up for the book!" He glosses the phrase "his nose is always brown" as "he's a sycophant of the lowest order", adding "and so is the c.p." (Cf. "I didn't think that was sun-tan on your nose": "a C20—and esp. Suffolk—c.p.") Of "looking for maidenheads" (*i.e.*, for something exceedingly scarce) he remarks, "since WW2 becoming increasingly difficult to find, hence . . . now somewhat nostalgic and obsolescent." He pursues the theme in the entry on "think of England": advice to a young bride ignorant about the facts of life, "very little needed since 1945." And apropos of "as the actress said to the bishop" (and vice versa) he ventures the opinion that "only very slightly obsolescent by 1975, it is likely to outlive most of us." Quite true: like "famous last words" ("one of the most memorable and trenchant of all c.pp."), it fits practically anything. As the bishop said to the actress. . . .

Perdrix, toujours perdrix? But no, you can't have too much of a good thing. . . . Incidentally, the publishers very nearly contrived to bring the book out on St Partridge's Day.

The Cosmo Guide to Culture

Forget the content. Should a girl be seen
With Sons and Lovers? What of Graham Greene?
Updike's Couples is obligatory;
The History Man and The Great Gatsby,
The Good Soldier, The Sun Also Rises,
All these may be read. There's Mailer's Armies
Of the Night too. You must know what to say
Of Beryl Bainbridge. Jean Rhys is O.K.

For poetry some good first lines will do
From almost any classic. But the new
Poets are tricky. Auden is still in,
Larkin may be safely praised. McKuen
Is not quite the thing. Must rave about
Seamus Heaney. His North, Wintering Out,
And Death of a Naturalist should be known.
Outside of these few leave the stuff alone.

Opera is optional. If you're bored
You may say so. We doubt you can afford
A stall for The Ring. Midsummer Marriage
Though is a mind fuck. Pluck up your courage
And see it. Cinema is not special:
You can say what you like. Praise Bunuel.
You're left with Ballet, Theatre and Art;
You must know David Hockney for a start.

Ballet is sublimated sex. You are
To like Contemporary Dance. Conjure
Up Brecht at a party. The Ancient Greeks
May safely be ignored but Chekhov reeks
Of culture. Osborne's out. Stoppard and Gray
Are the boys. Among those not quite au fait
Is David Storey though he may just pass,
But Alan Ayckbourn's far too middle-class.

George Szirtes

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The Haggin/Burghauser Memories

Furtwängler & Toscanini

By Yehudi Menuhin

MAY I BEG the hospitality of your columns to comment upon the article by B. H. Haggin in your July issue? I wish to bury Caesars, not to praise them. Let their great souls rest in peace—Furtwängler and Toscanini deserve no less.

The recollections of Messrs Haggin and Burghauser might have led to a fascinating essay on diverse forms of human expression, on the contrasting types of conductor, each valid, powerful and compelling in his own way: a spell-binding juxtaposition of two totally opposing phenomena.

Instead, as I read the article "Vienna's Great Conductors" under the general heading MUSIC, I felt music itself defiled by that unholy alliance of the New York and Viennese tea and coffee shops represented by their respective protagonists, Mr B. H. Haggin and Herr Hugo Burghauser, than which there are no more notorious centres of musical gossip on the face of the earth: endless coffee, over-rich pastry, time, inclination, leisure and money and nothing better to do than manufacture gossip. Music in Vienna is everything, there being little else left in this once great capital, now shorn of power and empire. Music is foreign policy and the secret police; the Opera is both army and diplomacy. There is nothing greater than the Opera, so that everything which once happened on the wider stages of international conspiracy is now reduced to the backstage of the *Operahaus* and the *Musikverein*. In fact, the poverty of Vienna (though I hope not of New York) is reflected today in the fact that, 30 years on, they need to cook up old hash, old gossip, unsubstantiated, uncorroborated, unexpurgated, still undigested and putrid in intestines clogged with *Strudel* and *Schlagober*. It is all so tiresome.

Mr Haggin and Herr Burghauser's stratagem would have been somewhat more convincing had they not attempted so injudiciously to glorify Toscanini without qualification at the expense of Furtwängler. To consecrate one man's musical opinion into judgments both aesthetic and moral, to feel obliged, for lack of any firmer ground, to condemn a man so totally for his interpretations, techniques and styles of conducting, for his moral qualities, while at the same time raising his contemporary in a halo of perfection encompassing all the virtues of courage, generosity, perfection, compassion for those who served him (as when he chided Szell on the latter's "mistreatment of the orchestra"), is to reveal a most embarrassing prejudice, immoral and petty, in the way these two popular scribes, reinforcing one another's "infallible" memories of half-a-century, present this implausible account.

Why must Daniel Barenboim's comment be "nonsense"? Why dredge up men's-room gossip, even if it is an opera house men's-room? These gentlemen recall situations decades past which are mostly hearsay and which would be totally unable to withstand cross-examination in a courtroom. I feel weary that such stale fare should be warmed up and offered one as the gospel truth.

I KNEW BOTH Toscanini and Furtwängler quite well; Toscanini since I was a boy in New York, though Furtwängler not until after the War. Both men had their greatnesses and their weaknesses.

Toscanini was totally dedicated to serving the composer verbatim, never doubting that he understood perfectly the composer's intentions, and to producing an impeccable and brilliant performance. His being was infused with the clarity and passion of Latin light, a holy fire for the music he served; he was convinced of his own infallibility, possessed of demons, intransigence and temper; small, compact, dynamic, a man of power and purpose, commanding the most beautiful and expressive Italian gestures; a wonderful face, somewhat brutal hands. He was supremely single-minded, studying scores rather than reading books, and his sole distraction was to watch boxing on television (which he adored). He was a great man and I fell under his spell; and still remain under the spell of his extraordinary interpretations of the Beethoven Symphonies which I heard so often in New York as a young man. The sound of his orchestra was unmistakable and his interpretations had the propelling power, the cleanness of line, the dynamic integrity which remain undeniably his own and no one else's.

It is characteristic of Toscanini that he scorned Furtwängler on a matter of trivial inaccuracy; I believe it betrays a lack of depth in his personality. He was totally intolerant of other conductors, as a matter of fact. Following a concert I gave for the "restoration appeal" of La Scala in Milan, which Toscanini attended, we sat at dinner together and he left no conductor unscathed and was encouraged in this by his followers and flatterers. I found myself feeling ever more

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isolated. I tried to recall a name which had not yet been mentioned, which had not yet been dismissed. I suggested that perhaps Bruno Walter was a conductor of quality.

"A sentimental fool" was Toscanini's reply.

I should not take up the space of your columns in repeating the famous anecdote that by now most people must have heard: when, during a quiet piano rehearsal of the slow movement of the Beethoven violin concerto in Toscanini's apartment (in the old Astor Hotel in New York on 43rd Street), the telephone rang and without interrupting the quiet flow of the piece we went on, while all the time the volcano was preparing to erupt and finally burst open; Toscanini dashed to the wall, ripped out the telephone by its very roots, with super-human force, leaving plaster and wires hanging forlornly. Quietly relieved, we continued without a word, the great man's simplicity and directness having been revealed at a stroke.

His marvellous mercurial temperament was of no avail, however, in recovering from the appalling shock of being told he had to leave New York and his beloved NBC Orchestra. For him it was the *coup de grâce*. When I heard of his distress, my wife and I made a point of visiting him on his island in Lago Maggiore in the Swiss Ticino. We were subjected to a three-hour tirade of bitter fury over such deception: that in a country which he had loved and to which he had given so much he should be so suddenly cashiered. It seems fateful that he should have been so cruelly punished for a very minor lapse from the very perfection he served so zealously his whole life. It was "*incredibile*" that he should have been made to pay so dearly for this one error, this slip of memory, which seemed to be pretext enough to bring finally to an end one of the most magnificent contributions to American musical culture.

When he finally had expended his fury and relaxed, thinking of the future, his dearest wish was to conduct the BBC Orchestra. For, quite remarkably and curiously, both he and Furtwängler found their greatest joy in conducting the London orchestras. Furtwängler once said he would rather do *Tristan* with the Philharmonia than with any other orchestra in the world, and Toscanini never forgot the many times he conducted the Verdi Requiem with the BBC Orchestra. (There is no doubt something extraordinarily stimulating in an English orchestra. They are not only extremely self-disciplined and quick; they are inventive, creative, and always ready to allow for improvising flights of fancy. They are extremely self-contained and most efficient at solving their own group and section problems.)

FURTWÄNGLER WAS COMPLEX beyond belief, long, lean, distinguished and aristocratic. He was steeped in a tradition as deep and continuous as the archaeological strata which he and his father studied; mystical, dreamy, vain, petty when it came to swallowing criticism. But he was a man of vision, seeking and searching the utmost in the living moment. A composer of merit if not of genius, his approach to music, which he lived and breathed as Toscanini did, commanded a total fusion of all of man's conflicting elements, and he brought this totality of existence to his audiences. He conceived of music as mystical and sensual. He demanded the capture of the limitless in the limited moment. Each interpretation was a new one, each moment was something to be experienced afresh. He was an extraordinarily intuitive conductor, his beat hypnotising rather than commanding the orchestra and they responding by following him as though enraptured by his vision. To this day the Berlin Philharmonic carries his imprint, still playing in a manner which is both hallowed and visionary; and it is the world's greatest chamber orchestra, for each player listens not only to himself but to the other voices in the score, to voices *beyond* the voices.

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I CONSIDER MYSELF very fortunate to have made music with Toscanini in New York and with Furtwängler immediately after the War in Berlin.

In New York, the music of Europe was supported and clung to by the great immigrant communities whose lifeblood it was (and still remains). But it quickly became competitive, performances vying with one another for the labels "best", "most authentic", "most accurate", *etc.* What Furtwängler and German music represented to defeated and gutted Berlin after the War defies words. This music was the only evidence available that a German entity, a German culture still existed or might re-emerge one day. In playing with Furtwängler I added a certain dimension in assuring the Germans that their Beethoven still belonged to the world and that if they but observed Beethoven's principles they would ride a Pegasus to the heavens rather than follow the horsemen of the Apocalypse as they had. Furtwängler became the incarnation of all that was most noble and searching, self-contained and devout in the German heritage.

Furtwängler was always self-tortured and hypersensitive. Intellectually over-complex and scholarly, he would find fulfilment and refuge in intuitive abandon from the indecisiveness which often pervaded his practical and daily existence.

Once, when we were rehearsing in Berlin, we were almost ready to go to lunch having just left the orchestra after the last notes of the violin concerto. He begged to be excused, rushed back on to the stage to try the opening of the Fifth which was the penultimate work on the programme. He was frankly worried about the accuracy of that gigantic burst of power which sets off this elemental, whirling galaxy. Another time we had again rehearsed the Beethoven concerto, and Furtwängler made the mistake at the end of the slow movement of telling the orchestra that indeed that was the ideal tempo, the one they had just played and to remember it for the evening. Of course, when the evening came, some remembered and others followed his beat and the first two bars found the orchestra in two minds. Every other time I have played the Beethoven concerto with him they were together, and when we played the Bartok concerto they also were always together.

PERHAPS I TOO am subjective in allowing Mr Haggin's article to call forth echoes of that ugly witch-hunt against some European musicians when, following the War, any accusation, however unfounded, seemed better than none, and when a basic economic motive—"Keep Out The Foreigner"—was definitely at play. I know from conversations with American officers in Berlin that certain of the photographic documents condemning Furtwängler were forged. I am certainly not prepared to take the word of Mr Haggin and Herr Burghauser in place of the transcripts of the de-Nazification trial.

I am glad that Mr Haggin quoted Herr Burghauser's reference to Furtwängler as a generous, kind-hearted and even soft-hearted man, often responding at great personal risk to the plight of his Jewish orchestra players. I met many of these men in American orchestras later, all of them grateful to Furtwängler.

SPEAKING PURELY PERSONALLY and with no intention of convincing others but merely as an expression of the opinion of one musician—I love Toscanini's Beethoven, I am deeply moved by Furtwängler's Brahms, I greatly admire Bruno Walter's Mozart, and so on. No man need be extolled beyond human proportions and certainly neither Toscanini nor Furtwängler were holy men. Toscanini was not afraid to turn his back on Italy for he had a base in New York and had been there for decades. By nature, Furtwängler was totally unexportable to New York (witness here Mr Haggin's comments, which are so totally insensitive to the qualities which the great publics of Europe found in Furtwängler's interpretations).

IS IT NECESSARY to condemn, to exalt? Must we weigh the relevant features of such great musicians and men in a pair of scales, only to belittle or to idolise when both men were so palpably and disarmingly human? Let us rather rejoice that humanity can produce such remarkable and valuable people, so totally different as to be in the minds of their followers, not least in their own, so completely and mutually exclusive. Let us, at this remove in time, not sully our hands and minds with vilification and hagiography. Let us rather be grateful that we still have on record interpretations of two very great musicians, whose followers can still feel passionately about the one and the other.

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LETTERS

Moderate-Socialist Dilemmas

IT IS A PITY that Robert Silver's article ("The Real Threat to the Realm", May) appeared so long after the essay by Stephen Haseler to which it claimed to be a reply ("Can British Socialism Survive?", December 1976). For only those who, like me, at once re-read Haseler will have realised how far Silver is from coming to grips with what Haseler actually said.

Thus Silver tells us that Haseler "fears a revolution of the classic kind", and against this argues that "The real threat is not that in five or ten years' time the blood will flow in the streets. . . ." Yet even in one of the very few phrases which Silver brings himself to quote, Haseler is careful not to speak of bloodshed: "If Britain is not to become a People's Democracy in the 1980s then some sort of conflict between Marxists and democrats is probably inevitable."

By preferring thus to attend to his own straw man Silver deprives us of any Fabian answer to any of the urgent questions which Haseler raised. Above all those of us who still cherish our traditional liberties, and who want to perfect rather than to abandon democratic institutions, want to know how Fabian and other socialist "moderates" think that the former can be squared with an ever greater imposed equality of outcome, and how the latter is to be reconciled with a completely nationalised economy.

Two very distinguished Fabians have recently accepted that the answer to the second question is that it cannot be: Mr Roy Jenkins in a statement made shortly before his departure to a most unequally well-paid position in Brussels; and Mr Anthony Crosland in his last Fabian Tract—the *Epistle to the Costa Ricans*! But neither Jenkins, nor Crosland, nor Silver, nor any other of the Labour "moderates", ever tells us at what point, if ever, their commitment to democracy and to liberal values will require them to break with a party which is totally committed both by its theory and its practice to always more and never less state ownership and state control of the economy and of health and education services also.

If there are any such socialist "moderates" who still doubt what Crosland and Jenkins admitted I recommend to them statements by the most persistent enemies of Vote-the-scoundrels-out (*i.e.* Western) democracy. For instance, the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow, in a recent manifesto urging "United Front" or "Broad Left" tactics, insisted upon the verdict of ever-accumulating experience:

> "Having once acquired political power, the working class implements the liquidation of the private ownership of the means of production. . . . As a result, under socialism, there remains no ground for the existence of any opposition parties counterbalancing the Communist Party."

The eventual monopoly party does not, of course, have to be called the Communist Party.

ANTONY FLEW

Department of Philosophy
University of Reading

PROFESSOR ANTHONY FLEW takes issue on the persistent conflict of collective and individual impulses in political society. It is a problem not peculiar to Socialism.

Presumably he argues, *not* that equality and liberty are themselves incompatible, but that measures taken by the State to promote equality necessarily interfere with individual independence from the State. But there are other goals, *e.g.* order, economic efficiency, victory in war, and so on—espoused by non-Socialist governments whose promotion also necessarily conflicts with individual independence.

We may conventionally distinguish two kinds of Liberty: (*1*) Liberties of expression, conscience, association, movement; (*2*) Liberties of capital and property. It seems to me that (*1*) are more important than (*2*); indeed that (*1*) suffer if confused with (*2*). Payment of income tax will always place limits on (*2*)—but not usually on (*1*). British Socialists tend to act to limit (*2*), but I see no real threat therefore posed to (*1*). (*2*) have been increasingly encroached on in 20th-century Britain—*e.g.* the State share of GNP has at least tripled, without obvious bad effects for (*1*). The relation—if it exists—between (*1*) and (*2*) forms the crux of the issue. Central government ownership of the Press would put severe restraints on (*1*): but its economic relevance to Socialists' economic goals is small. The relationship needs to be established for Britain by evidence more forceful than random quotations from Moscow research institutes—which I should take with a large pinch of Siberian salt.

ROBERT SILVER

Trinity College
Cambridge

I.Q. & Affluence

GILLIAN TINDALL's article on "The I.Q. Controversy" in the June issue appears to advocate treating human beings like race horses—those with the better parents (*i.e.* those higher up the social scale) should have the advantages of better teaching—to provide this for the nation's children generally is a "luxury of affluence."

Descent from those higher up the social scale does not necessarily mean a better survival potential. I grew up among European Jewish refugees of the professional class, who had been lucky enough to escape to this country. Those who did well were immensely enterprising and adaptable, their children often markedly less so. Had the genetic inheritance declined? Was it the result of different pressures?

I enjoyed an excellent State Education and went on to Oxford and then to work in Adult Education. During the many years in which I have prepared students for examinations, I have constantly been refreshed and delighted by the unbounded enthusiasm of English children from uncultured backgrounds who, often at a surprisingly high age, discover the possibilities of academic study, and with dedication and enthusiasm take full advantage of them. And what about the many students from poor families in the developing world whose application to study puts our own young to shame?

Could we not argue just as cogently that academic aptitude and a tendency to hard work wear out in

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families, and need constant replenishing for the good of the nation as a whole? And that it is therefore suicidal for the nation to plan its educational programme on any pre-conceived assumptions of where ability and energy are likely to be found?

MARIANNE DAVIES

Kingston-upon-Thames
Surrey

MRS DAVIES HAS REACTED not to what I actually wrote but to what she imagines I might have meant, and she makes a fundamental mistake about the nature of the article in question. It was not "advocating" anything, much less any specific educational policy, because it was not that sort of article. It was a piece of observation and verbal and social analysis; it was not in the least concerned with what Society "ought" to do, simply with what Society *does* do. Our press is already over-choked with "pleas for" and "calls for"—perhaps indeed this is why readers are so apt to assume that any article must have a political or polemic content—but surely Mrs Davies should realise that not all articles in ENCOUNTER are of this type?

GILLIAN TINDALL

London

The Arts Council Debate

Critics & Supporters: Roy Fuller Replies

AS CHAIRMAN of the Arts Council working party on Community Arts that supposedly set Roy Fuller's wick aflame (or was it his spleen?), may I comment on his "fun" article? ("Taxpayers, the Arts & Big Balloonz", October).

As he says, he became the Council's jester. A "tiny example." Should we support Ethnic Arts? Contribution: "a lot of wogs cavorting about in the street." A larger example: Can we keep the great National Companies afloat? Contribution: "Prestige houses run by megalomaniacs for foreign tourists." He was right to go after so short a time with us, though we miss him dearly. So small a Council with such a hefty workload cannot afford to carry a passenger whose contributions were, alas, unconstructive, uninformed and ineffective—though often uproariously funny.

The report that he attacks, typically enough, he has not read (too long).

(1) "Quality not taken account of . . . no standards of excellence, no good or bad." We devoted 15 paragraphs to this very question. Quality of the work, we said (para 3.7) must be assessed. We emphasised that we found this to be well recognised within the Association of Community Artists.

(2) "Those in favour would have to admit the indifference or hostility of the Community to what is presented to them." At 3.3 we state "the essential ingredient . . . in the monitoring of projects seems to us to be Response". Response from the Community. . . . "Is the project wanted? Has it gained the support of the local authority?" We described in an appendix four typical projects which had manifestly won this support (none seen by Roy Fuller).

(3) Morley College. Far from denigrating the College we said at 3.6: "Morley College achieves a remarkable standard of excellence in further education in the arts," and pointed out later the scope for cooperation in this area "if only there were more local Adult Education Arts Colleges of the excellence of Morley College and the City Literary Institute."

(4) Political motivation? In our travels we raised this with every local government official we met, and generally, and we reported at 4.4.3 "little criticism" under this head.

Who, then, is guilty of slanted gobbledygook?

Roy Fuller complains that Redcliffe-Maud paid too little attention to the philistinism, indolence, ubiquity of the love of Pop, hatred of the Cultural past "to say nothing of the complete indifference" of the public at large. Here, writ large, is the élitist view. If only our poet had troubled to go to Liverpool or Birmingham or down the road to Tower Hamlets or Chalk Farm, and seen Community Arts in action, he might have come to realise that public support of the Arts is no longer limited to the production of "a series of compact and elegant volumes of English literature", and that people other than readers of ENCOUNTER are (to quote our report again) "becoming aware of the satisfaction, the enjoyment and the fun to be experienced in a great variety of arts-based community activities."

Finally, I am grateful for his reference to my successful dialogue with Richard Hoggart in the Lady Chatterley trial. The most difficult part of the advocate's art is the presentation of a witness in a way that captures the particular tribunal. In my next case I was doing the same for an alleged city fraudsman and after that a suggested bank robber (political overtones here?). Have we at last, I begin to wonder, discovered in Roy Fuller, prosecutor Mervyn Griffith-Jones' elusive servant?

JEREMY HUTCHINSON

Arts Council of Great Britain
London

IT HAS BECOME a fashion recently for our elder statesmen to recant the beliefs of their youth and maturity and adopt, in their remaining years, a credo which, earlier, would have appalled them. Thus left-wing humorists become po-faced sermonisers and revolutionary poets turn into custodians of public respectability. Perhaps this is an inevitable ageing process and, if one were not personally involved, one would shrug and forget it. Unfortunately, one requirement of the new fashion appears to be that the recantation is made in a vulgar display of personal publicity, and when one is, without choice, dragged into this, silence must be construed as either cowardice or assent.

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Roy Fuller in his Now-It-Can-Be-Told article giving his reasons for resigning from the Arts Council of Great Britain cites, as a "tiny example" of "mistaken patronage" the literary magazine *Ambit* which

> "has been, in my view, often pornographic, occasionally obscene. I could not see that its virtues outweighed what was likely to be highly offensive, in a non-artistic, non-literary way to a substantial proportion of the public who paid for it."

Earlier in the same paragraph, Roy Fuller says that the Council cannot shirk its "quasi-editorial function" since without the subsidy the magazine may disappear. This, he implies, would be in the "public interest."

I cannot comment upon the accuracy or otherwise of most of the accusations Roy Fuller makes in his long article but, as the founding editor of *Ambit* I do know that in this one cited example he has done no homework at all. *Ambit* was started in a modest way in 1958 and, since that first issue, has appeared quarterly without a break. To imply, therefore that a magazine which is now eighteen years old exists only because the Arts Council has provided a small subsidy over the past few years is both nonsensical and malicious.

Looking back over those early numbers (which I had not done for many years) I see that as far back as 1961-2 we were publishing the early work of Alan Brownjohn, Peter Redgrove, Peter Porter, Michael Holroyd, Roger McGough, Zulfikar Ghose, Tony Connor, *etc.*—poets whose work has been recognised by The Poetry Book Society, whose Board was graced by Roy Fuller himself. All those poets—and, of course, many more established poets—have continued to write and review for *Ambit* right up to the current issue, which contains work by John Pudney, Peter Redgrove, J. G. Ballard, Kevin Crossley-Holland, Fleur Adcock, Gavin Ewart, Tony Connor, Earl Birney, Wes Magee, *etc. etc.* Is that a list of pornographers?

But perhaps Roy Fuller objects to the drawings we publish by those well-known pornographers David Hockney, Peter Blake and Eduardo Paolozzi (in which case he presumably advocates closing the Tate Gallery). Or the design of the magazine by Derek Birdsall, a consultant designer with a truly international reputation.

Ambit offers 96 pages of poetry, prose, criticism, drawings and photographic reproductions by writers and artists of the calibre I've mentioned for 60p. Does Roy Fuller seriously believe that this is a con from which the unsuspecting public must be protected?

By whose definition is *Ambit* often pornographic and occasionally obscene? Apparently only Roy Fuller's —and here one comes to the distasteful nub of the argument. The borderline between what is erotic and outspoken and what is pornographic or obscene is a purely personal one, and to protect the public from one person's definition of pornography one would have to ban the erotic/sexual from literature. But poetry has thrived upon erotic material from Chaucer onwards (and backwards for all I know) and the definition of pornographic varies from day to day and place to place. Why, even Roy Fuller's own poetry does not eschew S.E.X. and one has only to flip through his *Collected Poems* to come across naughty words like "*bleeder*" and "*sod.*" Presumably for some people somewhere Roy Fuller is pornographic and obscene. Perhaps, too, Roy Fuller's own definition changes when he exchanges his yogi hat for the commissar's.

"*It is the id which has arranged its cesses/So as to season the prim ego's guesses*" he wrote some years ago. What a pity that his prim ego seems now to have lost its taste for seasoning.

MARTIN BAX

London

I HAVE NOT A GREAT DEAL I want to say in reply to Roy Shaw's response ("The Arts Council & Poetic Injustice", November) to my article. First, something that did bother me. My description of Laurence Harbottle (which Roy Shaw tagged as "patronising") was meant to be complimentary! I mentioned him—and Jeremy Hutchinson and Lawrence Gowing—to contrast their intelligence with the frequently unintelligent jargon (surely clearly evident even in the brief extracts I quoted) of the Report of the Community Arts Committee of which they were members.

I wish Roy Shaw had not so often brought his comments down to the personal level. However, I must try to defend myself in that area. To say that I lack expertise in the visual arts does not mean that there are no bad paintings purchased and prominently

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"The present expenditure in Britain works out at about 2½p per head of population per week. This is a modest enough amount in all conscience when one considers the range of activities supported by the Council's grant."

"It has been the pride of British policies for the arts that they were not, as happens in many other countries, implemented by a government ministry, but were entrusted instead to an independent body (the Arts Council), thus keeping politicians 'at arms length' from the artist."

"It is part of the Arts Council's purpose to ensure that a larger portion of the population enjoys some worthwhile form of artistic experience than at present."

These quotes come from:

"Value for money"

The Arts Council's Annual Report and Accounts 1976-1977

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displayed by the Arts Council—any more than that I myself would have had to attend a number of silly or unseemly performances and exhibitions to prove that such things went on, financed by Arts Council money. I didn't in the least mind dear old Richard Hoggart calling me a blimp, though if a blimp is one who does not see the need for reform and amelioration it may be thought some people still at 105 Piccadilly are rather more blimpish.

Certainly Roy Shaw's piece to my mind blimpishly lacked a sense of humour. My own attempts at that quality may well fall flat more often than not, but I enjoyed the meetings of the Literature Panel and the Literature Finance Committee I chaired; and I fear an element in them consisted of teasing some benefactors present and blackguarding some actual or potential beneficiaries. Hence, in the latter case, my use of "layabouts" (and I daresay other not entirely jocular characterisations).

Which leads me to more serious matters. I do not believe I have ever put my views in such an extreme or intemperate way as to nullify the need to examine them. I know I have a fondness for the comic and occasionally for the vituperative: but that is just to add interest to the proceedings. I try never to criticise for the sake of criticism. I do not think Roy Shaw really addressed himself to the gravamen of my article. Moreover, since I wrote it there have been several items or developments that have come to my knowledge, two of which I should like to get into the record.

First, the notion of the "democratisation" of the Arts Council, mentioned in my article in connection with a former Minister for the Arts, has been taken a stage further by a document issuing from the Labour Party (see *The Times* of 9 September). The long-term authoritarian perils of a largely elected Arts Council were discussed by Michael Schmidt in a striking talk on Radio 3 on 1 October (extracts in the *Listener*, 20 October).

Secondly, I wonder if the Council would have intervened in the affairs of the Institute of Contemporary Arts had it not been for that organisation's financial difficulties and demands. The Summer issue of the *New Universities Quarterly* contained a remarkable article by E. W. F. Tomlin reflecting on his visit to a play at the ICA. There has been, as Roy Shaw says, a new chairman and a new director there and performances such as Professor Tomlin witnessed may be things of the past. But can Roy Shaw assure us that the Arts Council will do its utmost not to finance elsewhere what Professor Tomlin succinctly calls "brothel-culture"?

Faint Hearts

WALK UP, *walk up, Ladies and Gentlemen, and see the great arts patronage fight! On my right, dapper Lancashire-born Roaring Roy Fuller swings haymakers in all directions. On my left (no political allusion intended) Roy Shaw, the Yorkshire-born Gentle Giant, counters with a crafty elbow and gets in quite a few punishing jabs.*

The ring for this exhilarating encounter is in fact ENCOUNTER *magazine. In its current issue Mr Fuller, building society director, novelist, poet and indeed quondam Oxford Professor of Poetry, spells out just why, last February, he resigned from the Arts Council after serving hardly a third of his term as Chairman of its Literature Panel.*

At Council meetings, it is said, he did not mince his words ("Most embarrassing", said another senior member to me, "the sort of thing that gets conservatism a bad name"). Nor does he in his ENCOUNTER *article: "To have Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams on the Council indicates rather more than bad luck"—Lady Bracknell would have said it savoured of carelessness, Mr Fuller is more inclined to put it down to politically inspired appointments.*

The Council's proceedings are, he says, "Byzantine." Too much money gets into the hands of "the idle, the dotty, the minimally talented, the self-promoters." Community arts, that seductive contradiction in terms, gets it in the neck, and so does Performance Art (the apotheosis of exhibitionism), not to mention "the hideous contemporary paintings purchased by the Council itself", and several magazines, "often pornographic, sometimes obscene", subsidised through his own Literature Panel.

THE COUNCIL'S RIPOSTE, **written more in calculated sorrow than in anger by the Secretary-General, Roy Shaw, will appear in** ENCOUNTER'S **November issue. Mr Shaw himself, as it happens, has been let off with a caution by Mr Fuller, as a relatively new boy having the right ideas, which may yet prevail. He is well able to parry some of Mr Fuller's blows, not least by pointing out that Mr Fuller seems not to have seen any of the things he denounces, outside the province of his own Panel, and except for those hideous paintings (I myself was reduced to refusing to attend any further meetings until one of these, a spectacularly repellent female nude, was removed).**

Mr Shaw rightly points out that Mr Fuller spoils his own case by grotesque overstatement. But he has to swallow a good deal—such as claims of maintaining value-judgments by those who patently do no such thing. And what, as an Officer of the Council, Mr Shaw cannot do is to underline something much more important, in the long run, than wasting a very little of the Council's funds.

I MEAN **the timid silence, worse than indifference and amounting to moral cowardice, displayed by far too many Council and Panel members. But if Mr Shaw cannot point the finger (and I have no idea if he would wish to do so) I can. I served on the Council's Drama Panel for ten years, on the Council itself for seven. It makes an admirable buffer between the State and the artist. I hope all concerned for the arts in Britain will resist the proposals now being made, under the specious, indeed downright false, label of "democratisation," to bring patronage of the arts increasingly under State or Party (any Party) control; a dangerous matter cogently argued by Michael Schmidt in an excellent**

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Finally, a word about the letters from Martin Bax and Jeremy Hutchinson, both of whom also waste space in personal criticism. It must have been obvious to Martin Bax that by delaying my article for so long after my resignation I tried to avoid sensationalism, and that any "vulgar display of personal publicity" (if newspapers like *The Guardian* taking the matter up may be so categorised) was not of my seeking or doing, and indeed is to me a fairly distasteful nuisance. It is quite pointless for him to rehearse the mediaeval history of *Ambit*: obviously I was speaking only of those issues of the magazine subsidised during my chairmanship of the Literature Panel (the subsidy had started before my time) and for which I therefore felt responsible. My worries about the pornographic and obscene elements in *Ambit* were shared by at least one member of the Council, and a public librarian who, when it was decided to send copies of subsidised magazines gratis to libraries, asked the Arts Council to desist in the case of *Ambit* because he thought it would give offence in his reading room.

Jeremy Hutchinson's abusive—and probably defamatory!—letter I think for the most part betrays itself. His quotations from my article are both inaccurate and misleading. My copy of the Report of the Community Arts Committee has notes and underlinings throughout—in fact, by training and conscience I am a compulsive reader (alas!) of committee papers. Has Jeremy Hutchinson forgotten the many unsensational discussions of finance, premises and so forth that went on in Council and committee, which I took part in with scarcely a leg-pull? And I must not be taken to accept the accuracy of the remarks attributed by him to me. He can't surely, with a tape recorder in his coat pocket, have been Dobsonising the Council?

How depressing are the seeming failures of Roy Shaw, Martin Bax and Jeremy Hutchinson to address themselves to the dangers pointed out as seriously and carefully as I could in my original contribution to ENCOUNTER. Their various attitudes throw light on J. W. Lambert's revelatory article in the *Sunday Times* of 9 October (see box p.94) about some members of the Council and the Drama Panel thinking it futile to express unfashionable views. *L'esprit de lavabo*, the phenomenon might be called, except that after meetings I myself heard previously-unuttered criticisms not only in that location but also from former colleagues I can (despite what Martin Bax says) still appreciate as being of the opposite sex.

ROY FULLER

London

& Lost Nerves

Radio 3 "Personal View" a few days ago—not yet, I note, reprinted in *The Listener*.

But an organisation is only as good as the people who make its decisions: the Officers, of course, and even more, in this context, the Council itself and its advisory Panels. Too few of their members have been willing to ask the necessary questions or to speak their minds. I don't absolve myself.

I BECAME a Council member and Panel Chairman in 1968, when, some would say, the rot set in, in more senses than one. It was then right that the Council and its Panels should inform themselves of the various experimental developments which were bursting out all over. It was not necessary that we should so timorously have accepted so much that was so vociferously demanded—in the name, for example, of the once notorious New Activities, of which I saw a great deal. It is true that the Council has somewhat pulled itself together since those dizzy days; but this I suspect is rather due to the changing temper of the times than to any notable rallying of the Council's courage—if it were otherwise Mr Fuller would not have been driven to resign, or to express himself with such self-defeating vehemence.

The Drama Panel aimed deliberately for as widely a representative a group as possible in terms of age, background, special interest, ideology or what you will. In theory it had, to balance the possibilities of the theatre large and small, a great capacity for cross-fertilisation by constructive argument. In practice, as in other areas of society, the young radicals, bursting with passionate enthusiasm, quite rightly hammered away at what they wanted—but the experienced, the supposedly level-headed, the intelligently detached (including critics, informed members of theatre boards, etc.) either didn't bother to come or sat sulking.

"GOOD GOD", *they would mutter as they left the meeting, "what a load of rubbish." "Why didn't you say so?" Shrug. One member, eminently sensible I had thought, went away and sent in a memorandum much longer than this article explaining what he would have said, had he said anything.*

I almost lost my faith in the uses of dedicated volunteers when confronted, month after month, with this stifled withdrawal—too often echoed in the Council itself; both bodies thus letting through much with which the great majority totally disagreed, and many of the sillinesses Mr Fuller often justifiably condemns.

WHY DID THOSE who are unpaid, and so have nothing to lose by asking those potentially awkward questions or saying what they actually think, so often relapse into mumbles or silence? Pure loss of nerve, I'm afraid: not even a feeble wish to drift with the tide, but mere terror of being thought old-fashioned, not progressive.

At least Roy Fuller cannot be accused of that sorry failing. Whatever the outcome of his slanging-match with the Arts Council, it may put heart into those who, without wishing to shut their eyes to the future, would really, given a touch of encouragement, rather not respond to rubbish with cringing acquiescence.

J. W. Lambert
in the *Sunday Times*

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AUTHORS

William Trevor's most recent novel is *The Children of Dynmouth*, (Bodley Head, 1977).

Kenneth Minogue is Reader in Political Science at the London School of Economics and the author of *Nationalism* (1976) and *The Concept of a University* (Weidenfeld, 1972). His articles in ENCOUNTER include "The Guru" (August 1976), "Dr Spock Thinks Again" (July 1975), and "Defending the Single Realm" (October 1974).

Elie Kedourie is Professor of Politics in the University of London and Editor of *Middle Eastern Studies*. His books include *Arabic Political Memoirs* (Frank Cass, 1974), *The Chatham House Version* (n.e. Weidenfeld, 1976) and, as editor, *Economics and Economic History of the Middle East* (Cass, 1976). Among his articles in ENCOUNTER are "What Have We Become . . . ?" (August 1975), "Arnold J. Toynbee" (May 1974), and "The Lure of Revolutionary Revolution" (July 1972). The third volume of Richard Crossman's *Diaries* has just been published, and Professor Kedourie will return to this in a forthcoming issue.

Martin Esslin is Professor of Drama, Stanford University, and from 1963–77 was Head of Radio Drama at the BBC. He is the author, among other books, of *The Peopled Wound: The Plays of Harold Pinter* (Methuen, 1970), *An Anatomy of Drama* (Temple Smith, 1976), and *Artaud* (John Calder, 1976). His most recent article in ENCOUNTER was "Media, Critics, and 'Medienkritik' " (February 1976).

Theodore Draper is the author of a history of American Communism (2 vols, 1957, 1960); works on Cuba (1962, 1965); *Abuse of Power* (1967), on US policy in Viet Nam; and *Israel & World Politics* (1968). He is at present at work on a historical analysis of America & World Power. His article was presented as a paper at a symposium on Intellectuals in Politics, sponsored by the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in June of this year.

Ferdinand Mount is Political Correspondent of *The Spectator*. He is the author of *The Theatre of Politics* (Weidenfeld, 1972), and of a novel, *The Man Who Rode Ampersand* (Chatto & Windus, 1975). His previous articles in ENCOUNTER include "The Owl & the Water-Beetle" (January 1977) and "The Dilution of Fraternity" (October 1976).

Philip Hobsbaum is Senior Lecturer in English, University of Glasgow. His most recent volume of criticism is *Charles Dickens* (Thames & Hudson, 1973. Of his article in this issue he writes: "I should like to acknowledge the influence upon this article of various discussions with Rex Mitchell of Queen's University, Belfast. Needless to say, he is in no way responsible for my conclusions."

Tom Paulin is a Lecturer in English at Nottingham University, and the author of *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception* (Macmillan, 1976). His volume of poems *A State of Justice* (Faber) was the Spring 1977 Choice of the Poetry Book Society.

D. J. Enright is a poet, novelist, and literary critic, and has held various Chairs of English Literature in universities abroad; he was from 1970–72 co-editor of ENCOUNTER, and is now a director of Chatto & Windus. His recent books include a collection of poems, *Sad Ires & Others* (Chatto, 1975), and a novel for children, *The Joke Shop* (Chatto, 1976).

Ted Hughes' narrative poem, *Gaudete*, and **Neil Powell**'s volume of poems, *At The Edge*, were published this year by Faber & Faber and Carcanet Press respectively.

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A NUMBER of North American readers are experiencing considerable delays in the delivery of the October and November issues due to industrial action by dock workers at US ports of entry. We have now made alternative postal arrangements which will operate for the duration of the dispute. We apologise to readers for the inconvenience caused by circumstances beyond our control.

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Life and Letters Today

London

DIALECTICAL DIFFERENCES: In the vocabulary of the Russian and satellite press which, by now has infected our papers too, a Cuban is always a "volunteer" while a West European is always a "mercenary." What [George Mikes writes] is the difference between the two, apart from the fact that a mercenary is always a volunteer, while a volunteer is never a volunteer?

THE TIMES

London

ONE FOR THE BOOK: *Henrietta Chapman, the tenant of 26-year-old Lord Burghersh's Fulham flat, on which he is trying to gain a repossession order, today said she once worked as the resident stripper at the former Josephine's restaurant in Charlotte Street.*

After this job she began to work researching a "major work" provisionally entitled "Power, Politics and Pleasure"—a book on international, political and industrial crime likely to run to several volumes, said Miss Chapman.

The West London County Court heard that in the course of her work she had between six and seven visitors a week at the flat—West London Studios in Fulham Road. In addition she made further visits to "representatives of heads of state" in London, seeing "dozens" of people every week.

Lord Burghersh, heir to the 15th Earl of Westmorland, is seeking a repossession order on the flat let to Miss Chapman since December 1975, claiming hardship because of bad debts.

EVENING STANDARD

London

QUINTESSENCE: *The authoress of a book on the experience of being a single woman writes to the* New Statesman *to complain of an allegedly unfair and misleading review. Her letter contains the following sentence, which seems to me to express the very essence of New Statesmanship.*

"He [the reviewer] fails to indicate that my 'perspective of sensible proportion' towards sex is not a hit at this valuable mode of personal interchange but at its gross social inflation for corrupt exploitative ends."

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter. No, it is a valuable mode of personal interchange.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Paris

GULLAH: *Gullah, the language spoken by American Negroes on the coast of South Carolina, is a corruption of "Angola", from where many of the first slaves came.*

I note [Waverley Root writes] that the woman engaged in teaching them English hopes that

> *"teachers will offer courses in . . . Gullah to teach people who speak that language to also speak English."*

Will the instruction include teaching them to also not split infinitives?

But what can one expect when even Henry Kissinger in the same paper tells us that

> *"the new administration needs the support of all of us, for it is essential that they succeed"*

—the use of a plural verb with a singular collective noun which might be acceptable in England, but not in the United States. And when an American spokesman in the same paper says that

> *"it's very obvious to those guys that we have not provided them with the first string in weaponry like we give to Israel and Iran."*

Considering what is happening to the English language nowadays, perhaps we should all learn Gullah.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

BRUCKNERESQUE: *Budget speeches are trying occasions. Before we get to the crucial of genuine interest to the man in the street—the traditional booze-and-fags finale—we must endure an adagio of Brucknerian length.*

But the passage [Frank Johnson writes] invariably lacks Bruckner's spirituality, dealing, as it does, with gilts and domestic credit expansion. During this development section nearly everyone in the House cracks on that they know what Chancellor Healey is talking about.

MPs exchange knowing glances at the mention of monetary aggregates. Distinguished economic commentators, visiting the Press gallery for the occasion, let out low whistles of astonishment at remarks by the Chancellor which are incomprehensible to normal people.

Just to keep one's end up, one tends to join in by muttering to one's neighbour something along the lines of:" Good God! He's not putting a stop to forward swaps on gilts in the future market before scrip issues, is he? This is sheer bond-washing!"

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Oxford

WELL-RED MEN: Mr Tony Benn has told us that Marxism is part of the traditions of the Labour Party. This may be so, but it is not universally spread. In August, 1954, Mr Clement Attlee was staying with me [Sir William Hayter writes] in Moscow. One morning he said to me at breakfast: "Have you read Karl Marx?"

This struck me as rather a loaded question, coming from the head of the Labour Party to the Ambassador in a Marxist state. I replied nervously that I had read the potted version supplied to us by the Foreign Office.

"Haven't read a word of it myself", said Mr Attlee.

THE TIMES

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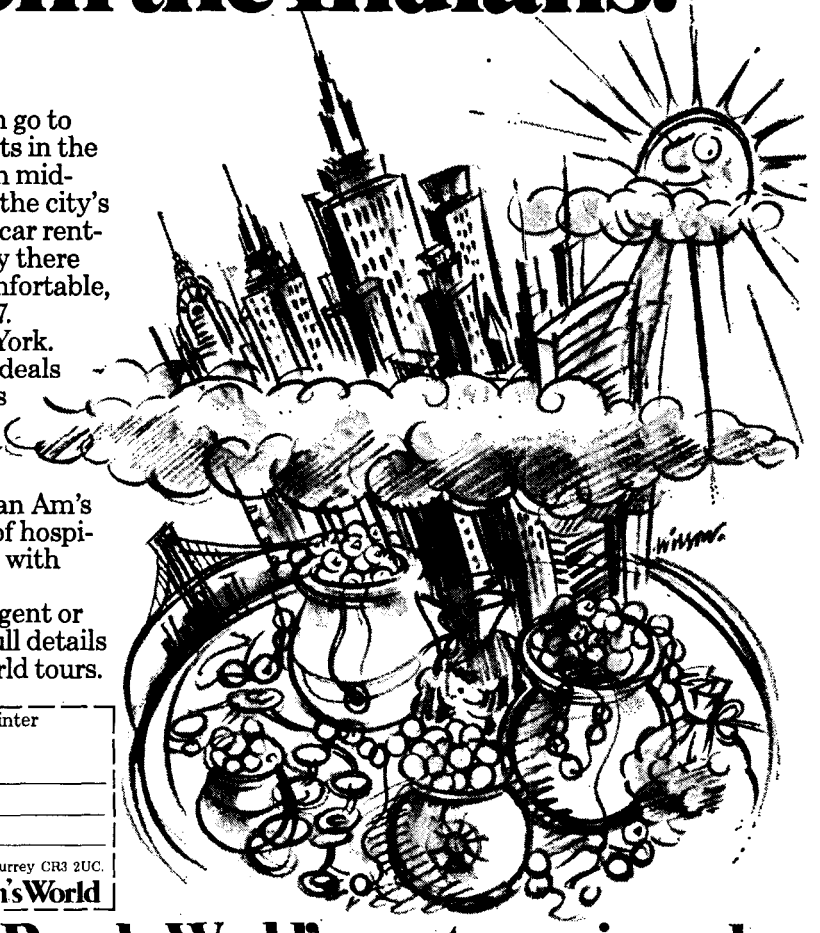

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